


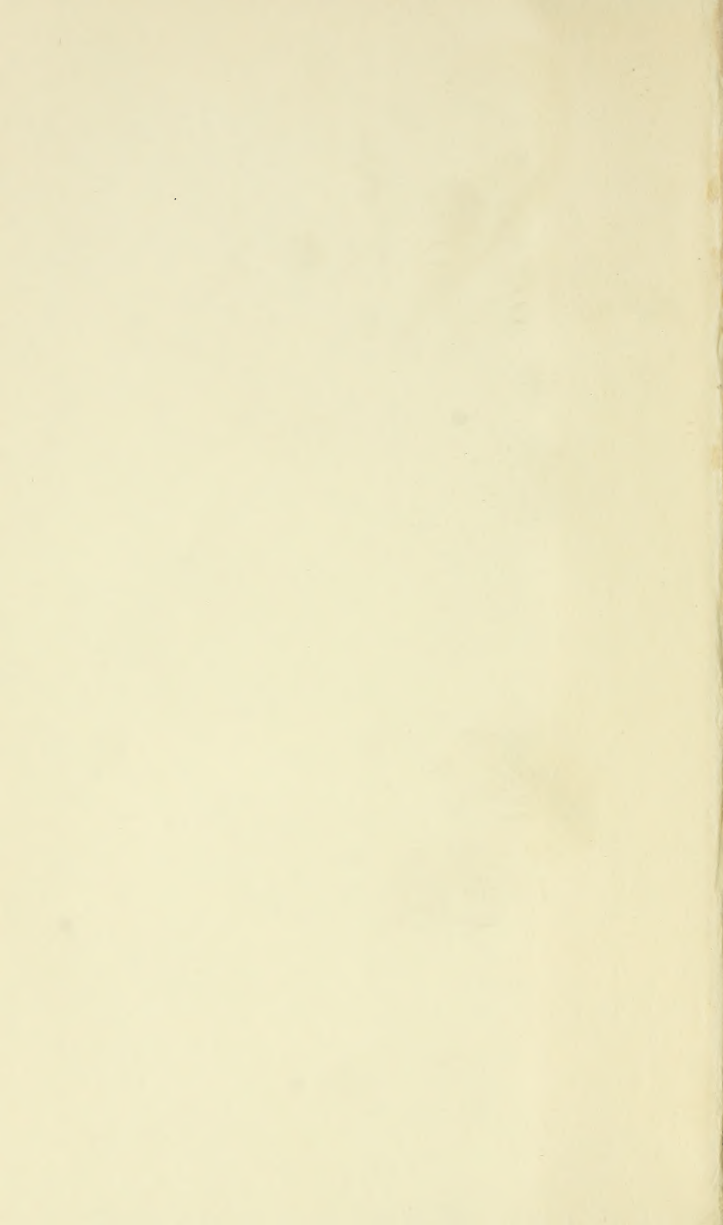
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



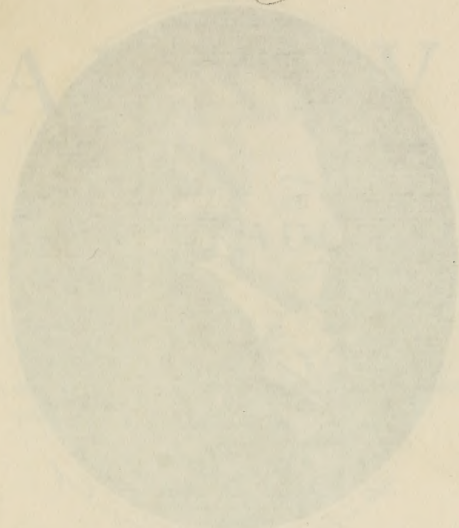
3 1761 01370617 1



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



13



THE NEW YORK
LIBRARY

OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

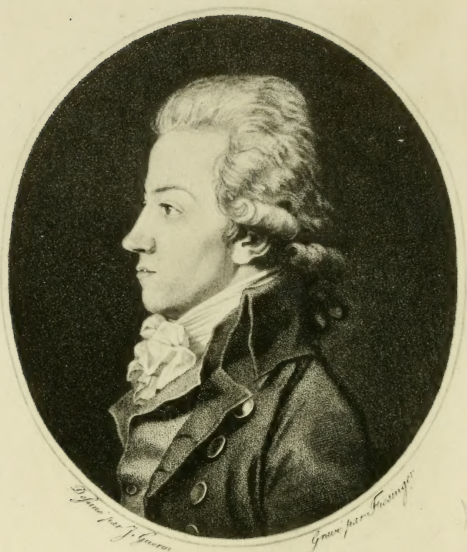
13/11/18

THE NEW YORK

LIBRARY

OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

13/11/18



A.P.J.M. BARNAVE.

*Député du Dauphiné
à l'Assemblée Nationale en 1789
du Président le 24 8^{bre} 1790*

A Paris, chez l'AUTEUR, Quay des Angoulins N^o 71 au 3^e

Emery Walker Del. sc.

THE LIFE
OF
BARNAVE

BY
E. D. BRADBY

“La nation française, vous le savez, sait bien mieux aimer
qu'elle ne sait haïr.” BARNAVE on 15 July 1791.


IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1915

139/114
14/7/16



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK
TORONTO MELBOURNE BOMBAY
HUMPHREY MILFORD M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

THIS book is the result of an inquiry begun entirely to satisfy myself and without any idea of where it would lead me; my reasons for attempting to write will be found in the Introduction. As I knew from the outset that I could only hope to get at the truth from documents of the period, I turned to these at once, and on these alone I have based my opinions.

There is hardly an event in the French Revolution which has not given rise to a controversy, and a writer who treats of a subject connected with it must needs be dogmatic at times or his work would be interminable. It is only in some cases that he can present the arguments for the conclusions he has formed; in others he has to state his conclusions without doing the justice he would wish to opinions which he does not hold. All that he can do is to try honestly to understand other points of view, and to hope that his readers will not think that he has failed to appreciate what may be said for them.

It is, I fear, certain that, in spite of care, there must be many errors and inaccuracies in a book like this, and for all these I would beg forgiveness. There must also be omissions; it is probable that some of the documents in the Archives Nationales to which I have given no other reference have been published, though I have not come across them, that information which I found in newspapers and pamphlets has been used in books which have appeared lately and which I have not read; but I think that wherever I owe a debt I have acknowledged it by a reference.

In the references I have given, *A.N.* stands for the French *Archives Nationales*, *B.N.* for the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.

I have occasionally given the catalogue number of papers in the British Museum (*B. M.*), but this is seldom necessary. Where I have referred to a work or a paper in one chapter alone, particulars sufficient to identify it will be found under the first reference in that chapter ; where it is referred to in more than one chapter, they will be found in the index of books, &c., at the end, and readers may sometimes be spared the trouble of a search among footnotes. I have tried always to give a reference to the original edition or to a reproduction on which complete reliance may be placed, but for one or two works and for certain papers I have been unable to do this ; thus I have been obliged to use the *Archives parlementaires* for the *Quatrième Recueil* of the Armoire de fer papers and for a manifesto of Brissot's, and to cite an incomplete edition of Montlosier's memoirs. I have also had to quote from the work of M. Feuillet de Conches, letters which, as far as I know, are only printed by him ; but as he is used by the best authorities, though his judgement is known to have been sometimes at fault, there appears to be no danger in trusting to him when the source of what he prints is above suspicion.

As regards the spelling of proper names, I have followed for those of the ' Constituants ' the correct forms given by M. Brette and now generally used, except where a departure from the ordinary form seemed to be puzzling or pedantic.

It is impossible to carry on an historical study without feeling deep gratitude to all those whose labours have marked out the way ; to the historians who have illuminated the period or who have published documents, often quite unobtainable otherwise, and have illustrated them by learning and research, to the careful compilers of lists and catalogues who make knowledge accessible. It is a commonplace to speak of the facilities which the fortunate reader finds in the British Museum, and to admire the generosity which allows the foreign student to examine the priceless treasures of the Archives Nationales, and of the Manuscript department of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and I am sure that every one

who has been privileged to work in these great institutions must wish to express his thanks for the courtesy he has met with there. M. Eugène Welvert, of the Archives Nationales, kindly shortened my work by pointing out to me the parts of Vols. II and III of the Lameth MSS. which I should find useful. I must also thank my brother-in-law, Mr. Herbert Chitty, very warmly for great assistance in looking over proofs, and to my brother, Mr. G. F. Bradby, I owe more than I can say for constant advice, criticism, and encouragement.

E. D. BRADBY.

CONTENTS

VOLUME I

CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I
I. THE OLD ORDER	7
II. YOUTH	16
III. 1788	42
IV. ON THE EVE OF THE STATES-GENERAL	59
V. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	67

ERRATA.

- VOL. I. pp. 18, note 1, 46, note 1, 48, note 2, 49, note 1 *for*
Perier read Périer.
 " p. 64, note 1 *for* Legros *read* Gros.
 VOL. II. p. 256, l. 22 *for* La Revellière-Lépaux *read* La Revel-
 lière-Lépeaux.
 " p. 372, l. 5 *for* BEYLIÉ, H. DE *read* BEYLIÉ, J. DE.
 " p. 402 *for* Montesquiou (-Fézenzac) *read* (Montesquiou
 (-Fezenzac).

1700 *Bradby, Life of Barnave.*
 March 1915.

Face p. vi.

XVIII. THE AFFAIR OF FUGEDARRE	294
XIX. L'AFFAIRE DES COLONIES	315
XX. "BARNAVE MUST BE DISCREDITED"	349
XXI. TWO MONTHS' MISTAKES	362

CONTENTS

VOLUME II

CHAP.	PAGE
XXII. AGAINST THE STREAM	I
XXIII. THE DEATH OF MIRABEAU	25
XXIV. DEFEAT	48
XXV. THE RISE OF ROBESPIERRE	76
XXVI. THE KING'S FLIGHT	96
XXVII. THE RETURN FROM VARENNES	III
XXVIII. BARNAVE AND THE QUEEN	133
XXIX. MONARCHY OR REPUBLIC ?	168
XXX. THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION	197
XXXI. THE LAST DAYS OF THE ASSEMBLY	230
XXXII. UNDER THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY	259
XXXIII. IN RETIREMENT	276
XXXIV. PRISON	305
XXXV. DEATH	329
APPENDIX: BARNAVE'S SPEECHES, &c., IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	359
LIST OF BOOKS REFERRED TO IN MORE THAN ONE CHAPTER	371
INDEX	379

INTRODUCTION

Nor far from the Madeleine Church in Paris is a garden in a square, and here the remains of the old cemetery, used in 1793 and in the first months of 1794 for the victims of the guillotine, may still be seen. The clumsy piety of Louis XVIII has transformed the ground strangely. The earth of the graveyard is built up into a small, high plateau which has the look of a miniature fortress. At one end is the entrance, through a large vestibule and up a flight of steps ; at the other a domed chapel marks the spot where Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette once lay. At the edge of the plateau, on either side, the Swiss Guards rest under a row of nameless stones, cut like the archetypes of graves ; the two slabs nearest the chapel are said to be the tombs of Charlotte Corday, who at least killed Marat, and Philippe Égalité, who was after all a Bourbon. All that quicklime has left of the other bodies interred here after execution lies in two common graves, under grass-plots, one on each side of the central pathway.

The place is sadder in its significant symmetry than any neglected churchyard, and the undistinguished grave in the foreground of the chapel, as it covers one man among the dead who are buried there, is only a symbol of the undiscerning judgement of History.

When first we begin to read about the French Revolution we are certain to be attracted by Barnave, the young advocate from Dauphiné, celebrated orator of the Constituent Assembly and ardent revolutionary. His kindness to the royal family when he and Pétion escorted them back to Paris, after the disastrous flight to Varennes, cannot fail to leave the impression that he had a heart large enough to be touched by misfortune, that he was a true gentleman who knew how to behave in trying circumstances. This impression persists and it colours all the unfavourable ones which we subsequently form. The

more we read about him the more puzzled we become ; every writer, it seems, has a sneer for him as well as a good word, and those who wish to treat him kindly apologize for his many errors. The royalist view is that by repentance, abjuration of his principles and death, he in some measure atoned for the criminal folly of his early course ; the republican view is that he was a renegade who deserted the cause of liberty. Neither side can forgive him.

It is usually said that after the return from Varennes he entirely changed his opinions and devoted himself to propping up the falling monarchy and trying to save the royal family. Madame Campan has described in detail the long, private talks with the Queen, which converted him during the journey, and his double life afterwards, when he advised the Queen in secret while careful to keep well with the popular party. Madame Campan has said it and historians have accepted it. She has not said that he fell in love with the Queen, but it has often been hinted and sometimes stated outright. This view of his character as weak and deceitful, but generous, is preferable to another which represents him as designing and anxious to rule through the Queen. The exponents of both agree in one circumstance ; that he was inaccessible to money and ' won over ' solely by the tears of Marie-Antoinette.

We learn from various authorities that he was excessively vain, inordinately ambitious, uneasily jealous of Mirabeau, acrid, spiteful, and yet good at heart ; cold-blooded and yet dangerously impulsive ; continually showing ' levity ', although the epithet seems grotesquely inapplicable to anything we are told about him ; an inveterate duellist yet afraid of the guillotine ; a ' cold rhetorician ' to whom popularity was so all-important that he sacrificed everything to it until, at the end, he threw it recklessly away in a foolish attempt to stem the Revolution. Surely, we think, this was at any rate a proof of rare courage. But no ; it only shows that he was so much dazzled by royal favour that he counted the world well lost, or else that he was appalled by the consequences of his former policy, to which he had never given a thought. It matters little that this want of foresight was shared by the whole of his party, he alone is blamed as if he alone

had been blind. This seems all the harder because we are often told that he had no ideas of his own ; he took them from his friends.

The Queen, so the story goes, did not take Barnave's advice, and he retired home and solaced himself by marrying a rich heiress. Her name is never given, but one writer goes so far as to picture him ' enjoying the enormous fortune of his wife '. After the 10th of August his voluminous correspondence with the Queen was discovered, he was imprisoned and brought to trial. He fought bravely for his life, but was condemned, and died " a deep and interesting penitent ", as an English author puts it. On the scaffold he stamped his foot, exclaiming, " This is the reward of all that I have done for liberty ! " which sounds theatrical but hardly ' penitent '. His end is used by both sides to point a moral. ' This comes of serving Princes ! ' cries the republican. ' This comes of encouraging Revolutions ! ' cries the royalist.

Why should we care about such a man, why wish to disbelieve the evil we are told of him ? We do care, for we cannot help returning to our first idea of him in the royal berline, kind and courteous. It is by a sort of poetic justice that his conduct on that eventful journey, the source, as he himself says, of many calumnies, is the very thing in his life which will ensure him a place in the interest, we might almost say, the affections, of those who read about him with eyes unclouded by political prejudice.

Then, perhaps, one day we come across Pétion's account of the return from Varennes, and learn with astonishment that, whatever Barnave wished, he can have had no private talks with the Queen on the journey, since Pétion was always there, alert and suspicious.

Perhaps, again, we chance upon the sketch of Barnave in the *Souvenirs* of the duc de Lévis, an old colleague. Here, with the usual blame, tempered this time by pitying excuse, occur some unforgettable words on Barnave's influence over the Assembly : " His speeches were all the more persuasive that he was convinced himself. That power of a true heart, which in matters of religion, when united to gentleness, is called unction, that cry of the conscience which all the art

in the world cannot imitate, exercise an extraordinary power over men in masses.”¹

Was this the man who has been held up to our scorn as a renegade and an intriguer? The man who, according to Madame Campan, had ‘often been tempted to offer his services to the Court, seeing its cause so ill defended’? Impossible.

And now, our curiosity roused, we resolve to read a life of Barnave. Here we come to a blank wall. For English readers with no special facilities or knowledge there is no easily accessible life. There are long biographies in plenty of all the wicked women in French history; there is ample information about nearly all the wicked men. The reader can discover whatever he wants to know about Fouquier-Tinville and Carrier; he cannot help discovering a great deal more than he wants to know about Madame du Barry. But if he wishes to know what Barnave was like he must read many books and search far.

Happy will he be if he light upon M. Aulard’s *Orateurs de l’Assemblée Constituante*, where he will find an interesting study of the orator, written with the charm of style and the authority of learning which characterize that distinguished historian. He will also find what M. Aulard never fails to put into the hands of his readers, however much their opinions and conclusions may differ from his, the clue to further search.

That search must be made among contemporary writings, for there and there only shall we find Barnave. He has been dead for more than a hundred years; there was no blood upon his hands; young, brilliant, affectionate and much loved, he deliberately doomed himself rather than gain freedom by acquiescence in a state of things of which his conscience disapproved. Neither would he seek safety in flight and exile, because, as his last words to the Revolutionary Tribunal show, he would not appear to cast doubts on the integrity of the judges of his country; because he would never say to the foreigner, ‘I am innocent, but I dared not stay to stand my trial’; because he held it better to die under a cloud than to live as a witness against France and the Revolution in the eyes of a Europe hostile to both. No patriotism ever went

¹ Duc de Lévis, *Souvenirs et Portraits*, 220-1.

deeper than his. Yet though he was a man of whom any country, however rich in noble sons, ought to be proud, he has had little justice done him. The Revolution is still party ground and excellent historians can still write about him with an almost personal rancour.

There are several causes why he has been misunderstood. His character was not complex and its key-note was sincerity, but it was of an uncommon type ; the circumstances of his career make not only a knowledge of one or two intricate political questions but also some sympathy necessary, if his conduct is to be appreciated ; there is an erroneous idea, due perhaps to the candour with which he acknowledged mistakes, that he repented of his share in the Revolution ; he has been credited with the opinions and doings of his friends. Above all, an unsolved mystery hangs over his dealings with the Court.

At his trial he denied solemnly and indignantly that he had ever had secret dealings with the Court ; denied it in a way which leaves no loophole for evasion.

Was it likely that he should go to his death with a lie upon his lips ? Was it possible ? His life must be the answer. We shall find it worth while to study him, to try to get at the truth about him by every means in our power, since, whatever his limitations or his errors may have been, he was one of those men who help us to keep our faith in humanity, one who followed his conscience when it led through rough ways and left us the bright example of a noble, dauntless, unselfish soul.

NOTE. While I was finishing this book there appeared in *O. G. de Heidenstam: Marie-Antoinette, Fersen et Barnave—their correspondence* (Paris, 1913) a very curious set of letters, discovered among the papers of the descendants of the comte de Fersen's sister, and said to be the correspondence between Marie-Antoinette and Barnave and his friends, A. Lameth, Duport, d'André and Mathieu Dumas. Not all the letters are printed, and from the way in which they are presented it is not always possible to distinguish between the inferences of the editor and the actual statements of his text, but parts of Madame Campan's story are certainly repeated. For my part I find it impossible to take these letters seriously, and I think it will be enough to note : that the writers show a strange mixture of knowledge and ignorance—Barnave, for instance, does not know the provisions of one of his own bills ; that

while they are acquainted with much of the information contained in the Lamarck-Mirabeau correspondence (published 1851), they are not acquainted with those letters of Marie-Antoinette in the Vienna archives which were first published by M. Arneth in 1866, nor with an important document in the Armoire de fer ; that the style of the correspondents has not been attempted, and that the tone of good society has not been caught. French gentlemen of the time did not write to ladies in the informal manner of these letters addressed to a queen.

CHAPTER I

THE OLD ORDER

It has been truly said that to write Barnave's life is much like writing a history of the first part of the Revolution. His share in the great upheaval began before the meeting of the States-General, for he was one of the leading spirits in the movement in Dauphiné with which the struggle opened. That movement combined daring innovation with a respect for tradition in a manner which foreshadowed the Constituent Assembly; above all it first gave public expression to the passionate love of the whole country which was to make the new France.

A few preliminary words on the grievances from which France suffered under the Ancien Régime, with special reference to Dauphiné, may help to make the early Revolution and Barnave's part in it more intelligible.¹

Old France was not a homogeneous country but a bundle of provinces and small states, differing widely from each other in customs, traditions, feelings, even in laws, and held together by the central tie of the monarchy. The Government had become aware of this want of cohesion and had already made some attempts at breaking down the dividing wall between province and province.

In all France no people showed stronger local patriotism or more salient characteristics than the inhabitants of Dauphiné,² a mountainous land through which two chief rivers, the Isère and the Drôme, run to the Rhône, carrying with

¹ I have been careful to make no general statement which does not appear to me to be supported by contemporary evidence. Among later books every student must owe much to de Tocqueville's *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution* and to Léonce de Lavergne's *Les Assemblées Provinciales sous Louis XVI.*

² Afterwards divided into three departments, l'Isère, la Drôme and les Hautes-Alpes.

them tributaries fed by countless torrents. The Dauphinois did not resemble the hot-blooded meridionals, their neighbours ; they were a mountain race, independent, persevering, determined and reasonable. The province had not been conquered, it had been ceded to France by treaty, and though in defiance of solemn oaths the Kings of France had infringed the charter of Dauphiné, they still ruled there as Dauphins, and royal edicts were always headed, " de par le roi Dauphin". The Dauphinois, proud of their history and of their ancient privileges, were always ready to stand upon their rights when occasion offered, although these rights had been submerged again and again and their ' Estates ' (i.e. Provincial Assembly) had been suppressed in the days of Richelieu. Dauphiné, together with the little province of Orange, was one of the thirty-one ¹ ' généralités ' into which France was divided for administrative purposes and was, like the rest, administered civilly by an Intendant, in direct communication with the King's Council and responsible only to them. The troops in the province were under the command of a lieutenant-general, representing the always absent Governor,² and himself commonly called the Governor. The garrison was large, for Dauphiné was on the frontier and its capital, Grenoble, was an important military station.

Intendant and Governor ruled the province for the King, and justice was administered by the Parlement of Grenoble, a great law-court, third in seniority among the thirteen French Parlements,³ and by the many minor courts dependent on it.

The prime grievance of the Ancien Régime, from which all the others derived, was, that the government of the country had become almost entirely arbitrary. It might be good, it might be bad ; all depended on the King's will. There were indeed laws according to which he was supposed to govern, but he had means of over-riding them at his pleasure, and he

¹ Afterwards thirty-two.

² The Dukes of Orleans, who were Governors of Dauphiné, never came to the province.

³ There were also two ' Conseils supérieurs ' which ranked as Parlements. The Court of Grenoble, founded by a Dauphin in 1337, was made into a Parlement by Louis XI when Dauphin, 1453.

and his Council alone made new laws and repealed the old. Since 1614, when the States-General, the great assembly of the nation, had been called together for the last time, France had lost such political freedom as she once possessed, and her Kings were in fact despotic.

Within their own domains and under the direction of the King's ministers, the Intendants were despotic too. When first instituted they were harsh and cruel; later on, when public opinion grew humane and enlightened under the influence of the great teachers of the eighteenth century, the Intendants were often humane and enlightened men who did their best for good administration and beneficent reform. It is easier for a despot, who can put the wisest thought of his generation into practice unhampered, to carry out reforms than for any popular Government to do so, and some of the Intendants reached a pitch of enlightenment to which we have hardly attained again. To give an instance: about 1788 the Intendant of Dauphiné gave work to the unemployed by setting them to make fountains in villages where there were none.¹ Some historians, looking back on the great social progress made in the reign of Louis XVI, regard this progress as all that could be desired and lament over the rude shocks of the Revolution.² They forget that progress depended on how much the central Government would allow the local authority to do, and that what was done by one hand was undone by the other. The Dauphinois did not care for social reforms made for them by some one else, they wanted political freedom.

The Ancien Régime was less oppressive in reality than on paper, because harsh laws were frequently not enforced. When general opinion was against a law it sometimes fell into abeyance, and the object of many edicts was to compel the observance of previous ones. But at any moment the law might be carried out and there was no security that this would not happen. For instance, in Dauphiné, a stronghold of Protestantism, the Protestants lived on excellent terms with their Catholic neighbours, and though they suffered from

¹ *Procès-verbal des États de Dauphiné assemblés à Romans*, 15.

² e. g. M. Léonce de Lavergne.

many disabilities, were no longer actively persecuted by Government or Parlement. Yet the Parlement still had power to declare their marriages illegal and to condemn their pastors to death, and passed such sentences on contumacious victims as late as 1766.¹

Men do not care to live on sufferance. Public opinion might cry out against injustice, but public opinion had no sure means of making itself heard, for the Press was chained. No book or pamphlet could be published till it had passed the government censor; no newspaper could be started without a governmental licence, and even then it was censored. This was a galling grievance, not seldom considered the worst of all by the thoughtful.

Thus, under the Ancien Régime, men lived at best like children under a parent, who sometimes lets them make a noise over their games, and stops it when he thinks they have made noise enough, and chooses their books for them, and allows them to read the paper when he is satisfied that there is nothing in it that will harm them.

One result of the absence of self-government was the grievance that caused most trouble in daily life, the ever-increasing burden of taxation. Here the Ancien Régime showed itself at its most arbitrary, as will be seen if we mention the principal taxes.²

The heaviest of them, the 'Taille' (the same word as our 'tally'), was a land-tax from which nobles and clergy were, in theory, entirely exempt. In practice they paid it on certain parts of their land, but it must be noted that when the privileged Orders did pay taxes it was easy for them to get themselves assessed on a lighter scale. In some provinces the Taille was levied on the revenues from land, in others on the revenues from all sources of those who were liable to pay the tax, when it became a kind of arbitrary income-tax. It was raised like a rate; the Government determined the share of the sum total which each 'généralité' was to pay, and the

¹ E. Arnaud, *Histoire des Protestants du Dauphiné*, vol. iii, 285-6.

² This account of the taxes is chiefly drawn from Necker's *Compte rendu* and *Administration des Finances de la France*; he is rather reticent about the privileges.

assessment was fixed in the 'généralité' by the Intendant, who settled the amount due from each village. It was then collected in the most harassing and unsatisfactory manner possible. The Taille could be added to with no other formality than a simple order of the King's Council. In the few fortunate provinces which kept their Estates, the Estates assessed the taxes. Dauphiné was happy in having won in 1634, after a long struggle, a decision that the Taille should be levied in the province on certain lands, whether they belonged to noble or simple.¹ These lands too were rated according to a valuation, old and defective, but made on some system and not varying at the will of the Intendant as was sometimes the case elsewhere. Legally the Dauphinois owed the King no Taille, for it had been stipulated in their charter that they should not pay it, and they never forgot this.

Next in importance to the Taille was the 'Vingtième', supposed to be a twentieth part of the tax-payer's revenue from property subject to the tax, but only nominally a twentieth. It was levied principally on income from land, and also, in towns, on income from industries. A second Vingtième was tacked on to this and, in 1782, a third. The nobles were subject to this tax.

There was also the 'Capitation', supposed to be a poll-tax. The amount varied according to the sum which had to be raised. The Capitation of the nobles was not fixed on any system.

The clergy of six-sevenths of the kingdom paid neither Vingtèmes nor Capitation, in consideration of 'free gifts' which the Order raised by loans and offered to the King from time to time. The clergy taxed themselves to pay the interest on these loans and to relieve the poor, and the Treasury granted them two million livres annually to help in the payment.

The 'Corvée,' or work upon the roads, was a burden from which the privileged Orders were exempt. In some provinces it was commuted for money, in Dauphiné those who were liable had to give personal service or to pay a substitute.

The various taxes on commodities were farmed out by the Government to *fermiers généraux* and *régisseurs*, who made

¹ See J. Taulier, *Histoire du Dauphiné* (Grenoble, 1855), 270, 275-7.

a profit out of them. Many of these taxes appear to have been imposed with the express object of discouraging commerce and agriculture. The worst was the Gabelle, or salt-tax, the scourge of the farmers, which raised the price of salt to sixty-two livres per cwt. in some provinces, while in others, which were free from it, it was eight or nine. Dauphiné paid about thirty-four livres.

No account of how the taxes were spent was rendered to the people, and the extravagance of the Government was notorious.

Besides government taxes there were tithes ¹ to be paid to the clergy and various dues, often extremely onerous, to the seigneurs. In Dauphiné the local taxes for keeping up roads and bridges were a serious matter, as the mountain torrents made sad havoc. The province was too poor to bear this extra load, and the Intendants had to obtain subventions from the Treasury.

Of social grievances the greatest was the exaltation of the privileged Orders, and the debasement of the Tiers-état. The Tiers-état paid by far the largest portion of the taxes, and much of what had been wrung from them was spent in enriching the nobles, in providing them with pensions and gifts and highly paid posts at the national expense.

In spite of all drawbacks the better-off classes of the Tiers-état were growing yearly more prosperous and more enlightened, yet the doors of preferment were closed to them more strictly than of old. They could only obtain commissions in the army and navy on sufferance, they could not hope to rise beyond a certain rank, and after 1781 ² they were, in theory, unable to become officers at all. They could not enter the Parlements; they could, it is true, fill places in the administration, but only by favour of the great. Always and everywhere they were inferiors, expected to bow down and give way before the Order of nobles, an Order set rigidly apart from the circumstance that each son inherited his father's privileges. Whenever by help of evasions and exceptions, which were plentiful under the Ancien Régime, a member of the Tiers-état began to climb the ladder, he climbed it by grace and not by

¹ They were less than a tenth.

² 1786 for the navy.

right, and when he had mounted high enough he joined the privileged Order.¹

Pecuniary injustice naturally pressed hardest upon the poor, and poverty in France was miserable indeed. But the popular lurid picture of the wicked nobleman harrying the peasant at will has little foundation in fact. The peasant was protected by law, and ten to one he would have found a champion if the noble had exceeded his rights. Nobles who were rich enough usually lived near the Court, exacted their dues by their agents, and did the peasants neither good nor ill. The poor were probably less dependent on the rich than they are in rural England at the present day, because in many parts of France, though not in all, there was a large number of small landholders. The commonest and safest way of investing money was in land, and after all the sales of church lands and forfeited lands which took place during the Revolution, the actual number of landholders is said to have increased but little. This "minute and vicious division of the soil", as Arthur Young calls it,² had its good side. But the poor toiled all their lives and the fruit of their toil was taken from them, while the nobles stood by, levying their toll and neither working nor paying. It was not the cruelty of individual nobles that the peasants of the Revolution wished to avenge, it was the cruelty of an abominable system. This is why they burned the châteaux of good nobles as well as those of bad, and turned upon their friends and their enemies alike.

Judicial grievances included a cruel penal code and the privacy of many judicial proceedings, but the chief evils of all were: first, that the Government had power to remove any case from the jurisdiction of the proper court and to try it by a special commission; secondly, that by an order, called a 'lettre de cachet', the Government could imprison or exile any subject for any length of time, without bringing him to

¹ Barnave says in some early notes: "humility distorts men . . . In France there is another great reason why the character of the Tiers-état is degraded; it is that, as they form themselves, the most elevated persons of this Order press into the Order of nobles." *A. N. W.* 15. Registre no. 1, 61.

² *Travels in France*, 112.

trial and without giving a reason. What did it matter that some of the persons thus shut up were better out of the way, or that the Bastille was a comfortable and distinguished prison? If all the prisons had been palaces and all the prisoners ruffians, the injustice would have been the same.

But always, through the darkest days, one check on despotism was left to the nation, one appeal to a law above the King's will. That check was in the power of the Parlements. Before an edict could be enforced or a new tax imposed in any province, the act had to be registered by the Parlement in whose jurisdiction the province lay, and until it had been so registered it was an offence to enforce the edict or to collect the tax in that province. After the suppression of the States-General this registration by the Parlements gave a colour of legality to the actions of Government which the monarchy was afraid to dispense with. And the Parlements, though they had no technical right to refuse to register, could refuse, and did. They were in constant opposition to the Government; they resisted tyrannical measures and they resisted reforms, their motives were often selfish, but in any case they resisted and thus kept the spirit of independence alive. Here an arbitrary and corrupt Government was caught in its own snare. It had used the Parlements as a substitute for the States-General; further, it had made all judicial offices, including places in the Parlements, 'venal', that is to say it had sold them; and in order to get a higher price it had sold them in perpetuity and not merely for life. These places had thus become the property of their owners, who could sell them again. Certain qualifications were required in the buyers, and the purchase of places in a Parlement had to be approved by the King and by the Parlement concerned; by this means a standard of fitness was kept up and these great corporations continued to command respect. A judge's place being then a property which passed from one man to another, the judges were immovable, and as they could not be promoted, practically all judicial offices having been already sold,¹ they had nothing to hope for from the Government.

¹ The Government still appointed to the place of 'First President', but these places were very few in number.

The popularity of the Parlements was so great, especially when, like the Court of Grenoble, they made themselves the champions of the people, that their position was impregnable. The Government might exile single judges or whole Parlements by *lettres de cachet* ; it might even substitute new Parlements, as Chancellor Maupeou did, from 1771 to 1775 ; it was of no use. The Parlements always had to be recalled in the end, and they returned in triumph, with increased prestige and encouraged to new resistance.

Round each Parlement was a large circle of lawyers, the flower of the Tiers-état ; thoughtful men, fiercely independent, formed into strong corporations of their own ; men whose lives were bound up with the life of the Parlement, who, like the Parlement, had little to fear and nothing to hope for from the Government ; men who passed their days in an atmosphere of resistance.

This accounts for the fact, often pointed out, that it was the lawyers who had the greatest hand in the making of the Revolution.

Because the Government was arbitrary and despotic, the first demand of the Revolution was for a constitution, and its first principle was, that all governments receive their powers from the will of the people and are responsible to the people ; this meant Liberty.

Because the Tiers-état was plundered and kept down while the two other Orders were enriched and exalted, the second demand of the Revolution was for the abolition of unjust privileges ; this meant Equality.

Because the hearts of the revolutionaries were noble, their abhorrence of wrong and injustice stirred them, not to bitterness but to a new and living faith ; they strove, not for the sake of pulling down the powerful but for the sake of raising the oppressed ; for the ideal of the Revolution was Fraternity, and its guiding motive in the minds of men like Barnave was not hate, but love.

This is how they understood the Revolution in Dauphiné, where the three Orders joined together and made common cause.

CHAPTER II

YOUTH

THE official life of Barnave, as it would now be called, was published in 1843 with his 'Works', or rather 'Remains'. It is a short and incomplete account by M. Béranger (de la Drôme), an historian of some repute, who edited the Remains at the request of Madame Saint-Germain, Barnave's surviving sister, and had access to all the family papers. Barnave himself left a short memoir or "justification" of his political life in the second part of his *Introduction à la Révolution française*.¹

His family, well-to-do bourgeois, came from Verchény in the department of the Drôme,² a village picturesquely situated on the river of that name, in a narrow valley about two miles from the small town of Saillans. Saillans was one of the head-quarters of Protestantism and the church at Verchény had belonged to the Reformed Religion,³ but the Barnave family were Catholics and their name does not appear in the rolls of the persecuted. Antoine, the orator's grandfather, was an officer who retired from the army when he had reached the rank of captain, married a Protestant, Jeanne Grivet of Orange, and settled down on his property at Verchény. His will shows that he died a Catholic, but his children, under their mother's influence became Protestants,⁴ a change of faith which argues uncommon strength of character, as it involved certain disadvantage and possible danger in days when active persecution was still practised.

Two sons survived their father ; the elder, Antoine, lived at

¹ *Œuvres*, i. I refer to it as *Introduction*. See there 119.

² They must have come originally from a place called Barnave, not far off.

³ E. Arnaud. *Histoire des Protestants du Dauphiné*, ii. 184, 334, &c.

⁴ J. Brun-Durand, *Dictionnaire biographique &c. de la Drôme*, vol. i, article Barnave, from which much of this account of J. P. F. Barnave is taken.

Verchény and died unmarried in October 1788, leaving his property to his brother and his brother's son after him. The second, Jean-Pierre-François, born at Verchény, January 4, 1712, chose the law for his profession, settled in Grenoble and bought the office of 'Procureur au Parlement', i.e. solicitor practising in business which came before the Parlement. In 1760 he ceased to be a procureur and became an advocate at the Bar of the Parlement,¹ and a very successful one. This does not imply that he spoke well, for before the Revolution advocates were only allowed to speak in certain cases and did much of their work by writing memoranda on their clients' behalf.² In due time he rose to be an 'avocat consistorial', one of the forty seniors who ruled the Bar. This office, peculiar to Dauphiné, dated back to the days when the Parlement was still a 'Consistoire souveraine'. It conferred 'personal nobility' on its holders, which means that they had the privilege of being taxed as nobles but did not transmit the right to their sons and ranked with the Tiers-état.³

M. Barnave was a man of austere morals, "held in much esteem for his great honesty, his vast capacity for business, a very sound judgement, a firm character, and a great love of work. He looked cold and even severe, but his heart was tender and he was very fond of his family."⁴ His interests were much absorbed by his profession and he collected a good library of law books, to which he added dictionaries and works of reference. In 1788 he was holding in no less than ten places the post of 'juge seigneurial', always filled in Dauphiné by eminent advocates or judges of the minor courts. In most of these he acted for the de Monteynard family, whose business he did.⁵

¹ No advocate could also be a procureur; see Ferrière, *Dictionnaire de Droit* (Toulouse 1787), article Avocat.

² M. Brun-Durand says that learned memoranda by M. Barnave are still extant.

³ *Les Avocats consistoriaux*, by Casimir Royer, *Bulletin de l'Académie Delphinale*, 4^{me} série, vol. vi, 423 &c. M. Brette makes some observations on 'personal nobility' in *Le Serment du Jeu de Paume*, Introduction, lxx, &c.

⁴ David, who knew him (T. Lameth MSS., i. 213). Cf. Béranger, iv.

⁵ *Bibliophile de Dauphiné*, 55 (Grenoble, 1887), quoted by Cham-

He did not marry till August 24, 1760, and the wife he chose, a Protestant like himself, was the young, beautiful, and charming Marie-Louise de Presle, daughter, grand-daughter, and sister of Commandants of Montélimar. Her family belonged to the small noblesse and had probably become ennobled by military service, for as it was an axiom of the Ancien Régime that 'all officers must be nobles', the deduction followed: 'X is an officer, therefore X must be noble.'

Madame Barnave, remarkable for her cleverness in a city renowned for clever women, was remarkable also for her goodness,¹ and the marriage between this couple who were so different was a happy one.

It is a custom among Dauphinois historians who disapprove of the orator to sneer at his parents, to represent the father's 'personal nobility'—a common official distinction—as his private pretension, to assert that the mother was foolishly proud of her noble birth.² We will leave these stereotyped accusations on one side and point only to the indisputable fact that Madame Barnave did not teach the son whose character she did so much to form to value noble birth. Proud she was, but her pride was the pride of independence and self-respect.

Her real character is seen in her letters to her son, some of which have been preserved among his papers. It would be hard to read these letters without feeling drawn to the writer. They show an overflowing kindness of heart, a sensibility to every one's claims except her own, a warm and reasoned sympathy with the Revolution, a calm and steady good sense, a keen interest in all that went on. Indeed they fully bear out the statement of one who knew her well, that she had "much natural wit, cultivated by reading; a soul ardent, strong, and generous, which was revolted by injustice; a very feeling

pollion-Figeac, *Chroniques Dauphinoises : Les États*, ii, Introduction, ix. See Xavier Roux, *La Révolution en Dauphiné*, 5-16 (Grenoble 1888). The seigneurs paid their judges.

¹ Champollion-Figeac, who detests the Barnaves, places her among women noted for their "piety, abnegation and charity". Loc. cit., i. 228; see also ii, Introd. vii; Augustin Perier, *Histoire abrégée du Dauphiné*, 68.

² An anecdote of her pride to her husband's clerks and the consequent chansons made on her, which I am unable to sift, seems to depend on the erroneous assumption that M. Barnave was a procureur in 1765.

heart and kindness so perfect that it was impossible to know her without loving her for ever".¹ Her spelling shows that her education had been neglected, but she expresses herself well. It is evident that her son was the romance of her life; but her love for him, fervent and trustful as it was, was yet not blind.

This son, her eldest child, was born on September 21, 1761,² at No. 5, rue de la Pérollerie, one of the oldest streets in Grenoble, not far from the ancient Palace, where the Parlement sat, and the haunt of legal families in the eighteenth century. The house, once marked with a tablet, was pulled down in 1875.

The infant was baptized next day as a Catholic, and received the names of Antoine-Pierre-Joseph-Marie; Joseph was the name by which he was called. The reasons for this Catholic baptism were: first, that any child not so baptized might possibly be taken from its parents; and secondly, that only by being inscribed in the registers of the Church could a child obtain a civil status. Births, deaths, and marriages not consecrated by the Church could not be proved.³

There were three other children: Jean-Pierre-César, born July 17, 1763; Jeanne-Françoise-Adélaïde, born July 14, 1764; and Claudine-Charlotte-Julie, born September 20, 1766.⁴ The christian name, as a means of distinction, was hardly ever used by men in old France; the father of a bourgeois family signed his surname alone, in Dauphiné the eldest son merely tacked on a 'fils' to the surname, and younger sons added to the name a 'de' and the name of some land belonging to

¹ David, loc. cit., 213.

² M. Xavier Roux has published his baptismal register in *Barnave et son temps*; see review by M. Aulard, *La Révolution française*, xiv. 1140. Béranger gives the date as 22 October.

³ E. Arnaud, *Histoire des Protestants du Dauphiné*, passim; the edicts, which he does not give, have been printed in other works. Protestants only acquired a civil status by the edict of Nov. 1787, which removed most of their disabilities.

⁴ Brun-Durand, loc. cit. Adélaïde married in 1802 Honoré Dumolard (younger brother of the orator) and died 1828; Julie married in 1796 Christophe-Étienne Saint-Germain and died in 1845. She had one daughter, who died unmarried in 1825. (H. Rousset, *Les Dauphinoises célèbres*, Grenoble, 1907.)

the father. M. Barnave had a piece of property called le Gua (a common name, meaning, the ford) ;¹ his second son was called Barnave du Gua, and was known as Dugua in the family.

The chief care of the children devolved on their mother, as their father was too busy to spend much time with his young family. But when leisure served, he was fond of talking to them about French history. As he told of the deeds of great men his stern face lighted up and he spoke with a warmth and animation which captivated his little hearers, especially his eldest son, who never lost a word.

The boy's affection for his father was mingled with awe ; his confidence and his warmest love were given to his mother.²

One of his early experiences was to see her insulted. On June 26, 1769, when he was seven years old, he was taken to the play by his parents. The piece was *Beverley*, a French version of *The Gamester*, doubtless considered improving for the young. M. Barnave went to the parterre, where the gentlemen sat, and Madame Barnave with her child went to the boxes (which corresponded to our boxes and dress circle). It seems to have been the custom for subscribers to find places in the boxes as they entered, and as only one box was vacant she naturally took her seat in it. But orders had been given that this particular box was to be reserved for a friend of the duc de Tonnerre, the rather unpopular Governor, and the director of the theatre and the officer of the guard on duty—(there were always soldiers in a theatre, as police)—came to Madame Barnave, and politely requested her to leave the seats for the quality. Madame Barnave stood on her rights and refused to move ; and when four fusiliers were sent up to frighten her away she still refused. Meanwhile a friend had told M. Barnave what was happening and he hastened to the support of his wife. The audience now began to take part in the dispute, the bourgeoisie siding with the Barnaves, the aristocracy against them, and when an order arrived from the Governor, to clear the box by force, if necessary, everything

¹ An inference, supported by the mention of a property called le Gua in Barnave's papers in the Archives Nationales.

² Béranger, v.

was ripe for a disturbance. It was averted by M. Barnave, who cried to the parterre, "I am leaving by the Governor's orders", and quietly conducted his wife out of the theatre. The whole of the bourgeoisie, indignant at the slight put upon one of their members, followed him, and the Barnaves on reaching home found their house filled with sympathizing friends, who had hurried there before them. The evening ended happily with an impromptu dance and supper. It is said that the Governor wrote to the Court to complain and got blamed for his pains; it is also said that the Parlement gave orders to the municipality to take the command of the troops in the theatre away from the Governor, if a precedent could be found. The theatre was deserted, for none of the bourgeoisie would attend unless Madame Barnave did; and she stayed away for a year, only consenting to return at the request of the municipality and to save the people connected with the theatre from further loss.¹

The two brothers showed early promise and their parents spared no pains on their education. They could not be sent to school or college, Protestant schools were not allowed and in Catholic schools they would have been obliged to conform; so they were taught by tutors at home. There was little cleavage between Catholic and Protestant where the law did not produce it, and Barnave's tutor was an abbé, Laurend, afterwards a constitutional curé,² to whom he seems to have been much attached, if we may judge from a letter to his "dear master", written from Versailles when he was a deputy. "I can only complain of the ceremonious tone of your letter," he says; "the degree of intimacy in which we lived was founded on too just reasons for time to alter it." The Assembly intended to raise the salaries of the poorer priests, and "you may count on my not being the least favourable to the curés when we come to finish this part of our work."³ The sympathy

¹ Béranger, vi-vii; Brun-Durand, loc. cit. Champollion-Figeac, *États*, i. 209, &c., calls the story a myth of Béranger and Sainte-Beuve, but M. Brun-Durand, another enemy of the Barnaves, bears Béranger out.

² This appears from a letter of Madame Barnave, of 15 March 1791. *A. N. W.* 13.

³ Draft of letter, Versailles, 27 Aug. 1789. *A. N. W.* 12. 34.

which he always showed for the humbler clergy was doubtless due in part to early associations.

He learnt Latin, "a little mathematics", English and Italian, and when he grew older studied history, philosophy, and public law ('Droit public'); he was also taught music and drawing.¹ It is noticeable that though he lived entirely at home till he was twenty-seven, he was a conspicuous possessor of the very qualities which youths are sent to school to acquire—manliness, self-reliance, and that instinctive loyalty to comrades and love of fair play which athletic games are prized for imparting. He owed this part of his character, as he acknowledged himself, to the wisdom of his mother's methods. But Madame Barnave had a fearless and unselfish disposition to work upon. Her son, though little older than his brother and sisters, regarded himself as their natural protector and champion, and his affection for Dugua nearly cost him his life when he was sixteen. The boy, who was only fourteen, was one day insulted by some ruffian, and according to the code of honour there was nothing for it but to avenge the insult. The elder brother challenged the offender, fought him in a duel with the sword, and was wounded close to the heart. The wound was not dangerous, but had it stretched a line's breadth further it would have been fatal.²

The young Barnaves led a happy life. Their parents, though not rich, were comfortably off. Part of the year was spent in Grenoble, where they moved, at some time or other, to a flat on the second floor of the family house of the Revols, in the rue des Vieux Jésuites, another legal street, close to the rue de la Pérollerie.³ Part of the year they lived in their country house at St. Robert, a village on the Isère four miles to the north of Grenoble, with beautiful mountain views. They also seem to have stayed a good deal at Verchény, where M. Barnave owned property. They had a large circle of friends; they were intimate with numerous relatives,⁴ young and old; their Protestantism was by no means of the rigid,

¹ Bérénger, v.

² Ibid., vii–viii.

³ They were living there in 1792. The street is now rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

⁴ Barnave in his Defence, *Œuvres*, ii. 387.

Calvinistic type. Theirs was a home life such as we, in our vanity, are accustomed to consider characteristically British, in which the various members of a singularly united and affectionate family were bound to each other by ties of friendship as well as of blood.

The reader of revolutionary biographies is sure to be struck by the many glimpses he gets of happy homes and exemplary lives among the professional classes of the *Tiers-état*. It is a mistake to think of France before the Revolution as corrupt and careless all through; we ought not to judge her by the upper classes, of whom we hear most. Their morality resembled that of their contemporaries in England, but it is clear that much of the bourgeoisie was sound to the core.

Dugua, who showed great ability for mathematics, was destined for the Engineers, and left home to pursue his studies at the Royal College of Mézières.¹ Studious and able young men of inferior rank found a career open to them in the Engineers and Artillery, where brains were indispensable; and though members of the *Tiers-état* were nominally ineligible, down to 1781 it was fairly easy to obtain an 'attestation of nobility', which merely consisted of a declaration made by four witnesses of credit that the family of the aspirant was honourable and 'lived in good style' [*vivait noblement*]. Protestants were not discouraged in the army and a special order of merit had been instituted for them, as they could not obtain the cross of St. Louis.²

Barnave began to read for the Bar, at his father's wish and rather against the grain, for he would have liked to devote himself to wider studies. History and literature were his delight, painting was one of his favourite occupations, and the technicalities of the law were dry. At nineteen he had grown into a very attractive young man, well made, fair-haired and blue-eyed, with a pleasing face; fond of society, fond of riding, and something of a dandy, being always carefully and even

¹ Champollion-Figeac, *Les États*, ii. Introd. viii.

² See Dampmartin, *Événements qui se sont passés*, &c., i. 98; Madame de Staël, *Considérations*, i. 282; Carrion-Nisas, *Essai sur l'histoire générale de l'art militaire*, ii. 401 (Paris, 1824); Audouin (Xavier), *Histoire de l'administration de la guerre*, iii. 159 (Paris, 1811).

fashionably dressed. In reality he worked hard, reading steadily and taking copious notes, while much of his pleasure in society came from observing the ways of mankind. But he kept his studies to himself, took no interest in business matters, and gave an impression of cheerful idleness to the family circle. His father, who went little into the world, grew anxious and was afraid that he would become a trifler and fall into dissipation. The old man might well have fears; the toleration of respectable French society for vicious men and women was a constant source of danger to the young, and careful parents suffered many pangs when their sons were beginning to find their feet. Grenoble too was a garrison town, a section of its society had a reputation for lightness in the army and had furnished models for the characters in a notorious novel, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, published about this time by an officer.

The loss of a business paper and the writing of some light-hearted letters brought matters to a climax. M. Barnave's anger broke out and he spoke so sternly to his son that the boy, guiltless of anything worse than carelessness and not quite understanding what his father meant, did not dare to answer. But after consulting his mother he wrote. We will give most of this his earliest extant letter, which is characteristic of the day.

Readers of eighteenth-century literature and memoirs know how much time intellectual society was apt to spend in minute discussion of character and intention. People with aspirations took themselves seriously and expressed freely emotions and opinions which custom leads us to keep to ourselves. It would be unfair to infer from one private letter to his father, and from notes which he never intended any one to see, that Barnave was given to talking about himself with the gusto of the period; but it cannot be denied that these papers of his youth show an inclination to be priggish, self-centred, and expansive, which he soon completely outgrew, and which is in marked contrast with his character when formed.

"Verchény, 1780. Having learnt from my mother the reason of the anger you felt against me and fearing that you would never allow me to answer you, I resolve to write my justification. I implore you to read this with all the attention

which my need of keeping your esteem and confidence must make me desire ; these are the blessings which in spite of the apparent levity of my character I value most in the world, and I venture to say that I feel worthy of them.

“ I acknowledge that I did wrong in losing the certificate, though I was less wrong than appearances would imply, since the rapidity with which the servants unpacked and repacked the boxes at Crest and at Lisle¹ was the principal cause. Nevertheless I confess that I am far from being free from blame, and I only answer by begging you to excuse me, and by promising you that in future I will pay the greatest attention to whatever is entrusted to me. My excuse might be the carelessness natural to my age, and I try unceasingly to cure myself of it.

“ As to the letters which you read, I confess I was astonished that you should treat things seriously which I myself only regard as the most puerile frivolities, and which I really only think about in least valuable moments. You know what the passions, the effervescence of my age are. I have always had too much delicacy, and besides I know too well the dangers to which libertinism exposes one ever to have frequented bad company ; I have not on that score a single thing to reproach myself with, and as to the amusements I have sought, I swear to you that I have always conformed to the laws which probity, public decorum and my feeling of self-respect prescribed to me. Through all my life I will observe, down to their most unimportant details, those rules of honour which your lessons and your example have set in my soul, and which I feel are stamped there for ever.

“ I am less frivolous and less trifling than one usually is at my age. Whatever of these faults remains in me, and the defects in my conduct, spring from seeing that I am so little trusted. I should have been inclined to apply myself to serious things, but as I could not, because no one ever employed me in that way on account of my age, I have given up to amusements and especially to literature the free times left me by my studies. At these I have always worked ; if I have

¹ Crest, the nearest important town to Verchény. Lisle, not far off, was the seat of M. Rigaud, an eminent agriculturist.

not seemed to give enough time to them it is because my temperament is such, that while I do more work than most young people I am, on the other hand, incapable of keeping my attention very long on the same object ; it wearies me, depresses me, and finally makes me ill when I try to persist in it.

“ I am not a child at all ; the trouble you have taken over my education—for which I feel a livelier gratitude every day—the inappreciable advantage I have had of passing my life with you and with my mother, cannot have been without effect. Another reason has helped ; my nature, like my brother’s, was to grow up early ; since I was seventeen I have sought the society of those older than myself, and now, in company, I only associate with persons whose characters are quite formed. I have observed and I have reflected ; in ways suggested by your advice, by what I heard, by my own ideas. The profession you proposed to me was little to my taste, on account of the humiliation towards which I believed I saw it fast tending. Besides, I feared that my kind of temperament would have difficulty in getting used to it and would always keep me in a mediocre rank, at least where the long and laborious business of technical knowledge is concerned. Nevertheless the blank or the uncertainty which I saw in all other careers and, more than anything else, the pleasure I thought I should give you by following this one, prevailed over these reasons and I set myself to study for it. If I have given a little time to society, the esteem of worthy people has always been what I looked for most there, and I believe I can say that those who know me have not those ideas of me which I am so much afraid of seeing you adopt.

“ If the letters you have seen show that on this visit here I have not always been thinking of serious things, at least it is certain that my most constant care has been to acquire the esteem of grown-up people, and that the time I have passed at Verchény has all been employed either in studying law, or in thinking, or in taking walks with my sisters ; during which I have tried to cultivate their minds, to form their hearts, to make them wish to have the feelings, the conduct, the modesty, the simplicity, the confidence in their mother which

it seemed to me were suitable to their age, their sex and their situation. I have done this at the times when my mother being busy elsewhere could not do it herself, and according to the same plans that I see her follow.

"I promise, for the future, to cure myself entirely of that disorder in my belongings which is, I believe, the only thing in which I am very much to blame.

"I confine myself to wishing that you would put more confidence in me, and that you would come to believe that at nineteen, with your advice, with the education I have had, the kind of life I lead and the zeal I feel, one may be capable of applying oneself to serious things.

"I hope that you will forgive me for this letter on behalf of the motive which has made me write it ; I even hope that you may alter your way of thinking of me. But however you may treat your son about this, it will not change anything in the feelings of respect, love, and gratitude which your goodness has impressed upon his heart for ever."¹

The letter had the desired effect and from henceforth the father trusted his son ; the mother, who knew him better, had never doubted him. A phase of even "apparent levity" cannot have been of long duration with this serious-minded and steady young man.

His methods with his sisters sound so ponderous that one is glad to find how much nonsense was mixed with his instructions. He writes to them soon after, on Jan. 6th, 1781, from Verchény :

"Young ladies:—Never lose the memory of the virtuous maxims which my lessons and my example must have inculcated. Be resigned, love quiet and retirement and prefer the cloister openly to the world ; embroider waistcoats carefully, learn to make shirts in a superior manner, and I promise you happiness on earth and in Heaven.

"On this point I have collected the opinions of a vast number of saints, men and women, whose lives and writings we have here ; I would quote them to you if, unhappily for you, you were less ignorant. Never read, never write, because, besides spoiling the eyesight these are inventions of the devil."

¹ *Œuvres*, iv. 313-18 ; Béranger, ix-x.

He proceeds to give them serious advice as to their conduct, and after signing "Barnave fils" adds in a postscript: "Would you have guessed it was I? what progress since I saw you!" He evidently taught the girls drawing, for he tells them, if they have no more copies to do the old ones again several times, trying to draw clearly and lightly.¹

The sisters do not seem to have resented his elder-brotherly tone. Indeed they could hardly have resented anything from a brother who cared so much for them that he was always interested in everything that concerned them, from their education to their dress and appearance; always anxious that they should please and be admired. When, on his father's death, the largest share of the inheritance fell to him, his first thought was to increase his sisters' portions.²

His reading for the Bar was carried on in conjunction with other studies, and before he knew much of Civil Law he had read and made *précis* of most of the existing French works on political law.³ He was indefatigable with his pen, and early fell into the habit of jotting down his observations. At the beginning of each year, down to the Revolution, he wrote an account of the last, praising and blaming his own conduct with naïve impartiality. All these reflections and observations were for his own eye alone. In 1781 he made an alphabetical arrangement which he called, "Dictionary of thoughts, or collection of morals, philosophy, poetry, the sublime, the trivial, the exact, the inexact, the true, the false, the conjectural". He also wrote 'portraits' after the fashion of the day.⁴

Three great literary influences were then moulding French thought: Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu, and the men of the day are often classed under their schools. Barnave took neither Voltaire nor Rousseau for his master. Voltaire he detested as a man of no character, thought his works superficial, and their popular success due to the fact that they were easily understood because there was little in them.

¹ *Œuvres*, iv. 319-20.

² Béranger, xiii.

³ *Introduction*, 96.

⁴ Béranger, ix, xi. M. J. de Beylié has published some of the Portraits in the *Bulletin de l'Académie Delphinale*, 4^{me} série, xii. (1898), p. 539, &c.

Rousseau he admired but criticized. "He has spoilt many an education, he has turned the heads of many young people and made many folks lunatics who would only have been fools," he writes ; but adds that the lunatics, when age and reflection have sobered them, may do all the better for having been stirred up. For Montesquieu, who influenced him profoundly, he had nothing but admiration. He regarded the famous *Considérations sur la grandeur et la décadence des Romains* as "the touchstone of a young man", and the *Esprit des Lois* was the foundation of his political ideas. But he was too independent to follow Montesquieu blindly, and like all the best politicians of his time found in him not an oracle, but a guide and incentive to thought. Another influence was the abbé Mably, one of the glories of Dauphiné, an historian more solid than brilliant, who 'always subordinated politics to morality'.¹

These interests made him rather cold to his intended profession, and some reflections which he wrote when he was making up his mind show that he looked on it as a stepping-stone.

"Whatever public career I wish to follow, it is essentially best for me to begin with that of the Bar. Is it to be in the judicial body? The result will be that I shall be certain of admission. Is it to be in the administration? The habit of working, that weight with the public which comes from having the reputation of a useful man, and the advantage of being able to speak, will help to get me a place and to make me succeed there. Meanwhile in this profession I shall gain domestic independence and a standing with the public, by uniting to talent the honesty and the loftiness that I shall bring to it, incredibly enhanced by youth, by the advantages of fortune, and by that refinement of manners which is so seldom seen there." Barnave, who prided himself on good manners, had a fastidious dislike of the homely ways of many lawyers. He continues: "Whilst I am good at my profession and grasp its practical spirit, I shall take care not to let my tastes and ideas be lowered, any more than my character and behaviour. This effect will result: 1 From the way I shall practise it; 2 From intervals given to other occupations,

¹ *Œuvres*, iv. 255, 270, 271, 280.

especially to fitting myself for my future situation, and also to keeping up understanding, knowledge, taste and tact for other useful and agreeable things which, without entering into the round of my business, do enter into that of my occupations, of my resources, and of my pleasures to come, and which I must not forget how to exercise and how to appreciate." ¹

He was, it will be seen, ambitious, knew that he was possessed of unusual powers, and felt certain of succeeding. If his somewhat prosaic and self-centred resolves are compared with his later hopes and wishes, it will give some idea of what the Revolution did for the best men in France; for although he always rather under- than over-stated his aspirations, and made no parade of noble sentiments, he could not have written in such a manner if he had seen any career open to him which satisfied his heart and his imagination.

His character was deepened by a great sorrow. Dugua entered the Engineers, doing so well in his examinations that the abbé Bossu, the permanent examiner, declared that he had never come across a candidate who knew more. His life seemed full of promise when, in December 1783, he fell seriously ill in Paris, where he was quartered. When the news came to Grenoble, the elder brother, in a fever to be with him, borrowed money for the journey and rushed off to Paris post-haste, without telling his family of his intention; perhaps he dreaded the delays of a family consultation. He was in time not only to see his brother but to brighten the remainder of his life. For the three months during which Dugua lingered, he nursed him with the tenderest care, but care and love were unavailing, and Dugua died on March 17, 1784. He was buried in the old church of St. Laurent, in the north of Paris, and Barnave had to return alone to the home saddened by the first loss.²

A 'portrait' of Dugua which he wrote tells us a good deal about them both.

"He was fond of literature; his extreme youth, the attraction of amusements, the long and continuous study of mathematics, and also that indolence of a mind which does not

¹ Béranger, xiv-v.

² Béranger, viii; Brun-Durand, loc. cit., for date and burial-place. As burials in churches had been forbidden in Paris, the statement is puzzling.

seek for change of thought and for instruction in books, but for enjoyment, had allowed him to give but little time to reading. Yet he read quickly and missed nothing ; he had that kind of memory which retains the matter and also the words when the words make the interest ; he knew French and Italian literature, too, fairly well. He could not be wanting in taste for he had an exquisite sensibility, a cool head, a wide mind ; and the habit of dealing with abstractions had taught him to reason about shades of meaning which the multitude does not perceive. But I think he had too much character to be a good judge, and his feelings dictated his verdicts. He never went out of himself to put himself into the place of a century, a people, a class of men. His heart deluded his mind ; he looked for the man in the writer and then judged the work by his affection for the man ; the relation a book bore to his own feelings and principles was always the first consideration with him. It is certain that he could have discarded his prejudices, but he did not want to ; and that belonged to his character too, for he had no pretensions, no curiosity as to what people might think about his wits, but a great indifference.”¹

Two fragments written after his brother's death have been often quoted. They are touching in the original and Sainte-Beuve seems to rate their literary value highly ;² but their harmony—it is Sainte-Beuve's word—evaporates in translation, and the language, natural at the time, may sound strange in modern ears. It should be remembered that he wrote them for himself alone. The first is on his brother :

“ You were one of those whom I had separated from the world and I had placed you very near my heart. Alas ! you are now no more than a memory, than a fleeting thought ; the flying leaf, the impalpable shadow, are less unsubstantial than you. But, O dear image, my heart and my senses can still embrace you ! No ! you never will be to your brother a being extinct and imaginary ; present often in my thoughts you come to cheer me in solitude. Always while you lived you were bound up with all my interests, we passed those first

¹ *Œuvres*, iv. 326-7.

² Sainte-Beuve, *Causeuses du Lundi*, ii. 21-2.

years which are so happy together, we grew beside each other, and the ties of our friendship strengthened with our strength. . . . O dear companion !—You are that still, I wish you to be so always—When a pleasant thought moves me, I call you to share my pleasure—I call you most of all when my heart is meditating some worthy project, and in seeing your face smile I taste my sweetest reward. Often you preside over the thoughts which come into my head before I fall asleep. I never hide myself from you, yet it is true that when my soul is full of its failings I do not try so much to call you—Then I no longer see you smile—Oh ! your beautiful countenance is a surer guide than the moral code of men.”¹

The second, written in the autumn after Dugua’s death, is on his mother :

“ She had risen feeling ill ; we all came down to breakfast, after a little while she came too, but she would not eat anything ; this made us all sad. As she complained of sickness I proposed some coffee ; she took it. During the rest of the day she felt no more discomfort, but we noticed that she was rather melancholy—So delicate and so tender, the slightest thing goes to her heart and arouses her emotions.

“ The south wind was blowing ; all through the day it shook the trees under the windows and brought down the last leaves of the year.

“ In the evening, as the day was closing, we went for a walk, she, Adélaïde and I. As we walked we sang tender and melancholy airs, we talked about the talents of Saint-Huberti²—The evening, the wind, the clouds, the flying leaves, spoke an affecting language—We were moved, and little by little silence took the place of our ‘ sentimental ’ conversation.

“ ‘ This wind makes me sad,’ she said once. A moment after I spoke to her and she did not answer ; she was suffocating. She remained in this state a long time, in spite of our words and caresses, to which she could not reply. At last the signs of our affection soothed her a little ; we succeeded in making her weep. With difficulty she pronounced my brother’s

¹ *Œuvres*, iv. 328–9.

² A celebrated opera-singer who created the part of Mélisse in Gluck’s *Armida*. She had made tours in the South of France.

name, as she leant upon my shoulder. . . . Tears came and they relieved her. The sympathy of our hearts calmed hers. I showed her that our Dugua is happier than we ; happy if our hearts are known to him, because of all the traces he has left there. We resolved to try, all our lives, each to console the other for the loss we had suffered. Her tears flowed more freely ; she became calm again—but during the rest of the walk we could not talk any more and all our thoughts were of him for whom she was grieving.”¹

Although the Protestant faith in which Barnave was brought up undoubtedly helped to form and strengthen his character, it seems to have left few marks on his belief, and the absence of any reference to religion in the above passages is noticeable. He never renounced his nominal Protestantism ; but he was the child of his age like most of the revolutionaries, who did not believe in religion, partly because they thought it contrary to reason, and partly because they had observed that, as practised, it too often opposed progress and identified itself with despotism. Yet the men of the Constituent Assembly never scoffed at it, and their scepticism, though convinced, did not go very deep and never touched fundamental questions of right and wrong. Barnave mentions the Divinity occasionally in earlier speeches and writings, and he would not have done this unless he had believed in a God ; but he went no further.

A remark in some observations on the study of History seems to throw a light on his own development. If you want a pupil to keep his religion, he says, let him study the Scriptures and talk on the subject with a man of sense, but do not let him read books about Christianity, for they are almost all useless or harmful.² There is a personal feeling, quite foreign to the time, in his dislike of Voltaire, the great shatterer of religions, which makes one conjecture that he must have wished to believe ; yet he hardly felt the need. Religion is both a theory of life and a stay for the individual soul. As regards the first, like other ardent spirits he found his faith in a belief in the principles of the Revolution ; while as to the personal side, he was one of those who are naturally good, and having

¹ *Œuvres*, iv. 330–I.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 258.

strength enough to resist temptation are never thrown upon divine succour to save them from themselves. His belief in the categorical imperative was unclouded, and he made conscience his guide. His standard was much stricter for himself than for others, as is the way with good Frenchmen.

Before his brother's death he had been called to the Bar, probably in 1782.¹ The Parlement of Grenoble, before which he practised, was a High Court (*cour souveraine*) or Court of Appeal, which heard no witnesses, and judged cases on written depositions taken by minor magistrates and on the arguments of counsel and judges. It sat for less than eight months in the year. Business was plentiful, for the fondness of the Dauphinois for going to law was only equalled by their facilities, and the Bar was large and distinguished. The Order of Advocates was a corporation with a strong *esprit de corps*, and its members had just given a proof of the tenacity with which they clung to their rights. Barnave must have been referring to this incident when he wrote of the "humiliation" of the Bar.

Pierre Revol, friend and landlord of the Barnaves, a renowned but too flowery advocate, was conducting a case before the Grand'Chambre of the Parlement on June 27th, 1780, when three of the judges, who were bored, interrupted him, exclaiming: "That is not the way to plead! Do they take us for ninnies?" The President tried to quiet them, but they refused to hear any more, declaring that they knew everything M. Revol was going to say beforehand. The case, therefore, came to an end, and was decided against Revol's clients.

The matter was at once reported to the 'avocats consistoriaux' who called a meeting of the Order. Measures to prevent the recurrence of such an outrage were resolved on, and negotiations were opened. The judges finally refused to comply with the advocates' terms, whereupon fifty-eight advocates, among whom were Barnave's father and Mounier,

¹ The number of advocates was unlimited, the office not being sold. A University degree was required and an examination had to be passed. (Ferrière, loc. cit., Art. Avocat.) How Protestants, excluded from the Universities, evaded their disabilities does not appear.

signed a protest, in which they announced that they could not continue to exercise their functions, and the whole Bar went on strike for nearly a year. The Parlement authorized the procureurs to plead, but their knowledge was inadequate, and the course of justice was so seriously impeded that the judges were obliged to give way. On June 17th, 1781, the advocates resumed work, after a public reconciliation.¹

It was the custom of the Grenoble Parlement that addresses on some subject of general, as opposed to legal, interest should be delivered twice a year. When the Courts reopened after the Long Vacation one of the advocates-general gave the address; the discourses of the famous Servan on "the Utility of Philosophy" and on "Morality", of some years back, had made a stir and were long remembered, and Savoye-Rollin was now following worthily in his predecessor's footsteps.² At the close of the Summer Term, in September, the addresses were given by advocates, and Barnave had the honour of being chosen to make one in 1783.

His choice of a theme, "On the necessity of the division of powers in the Body Politic" was daring, for in France the king wielded the executive and legislative powers, and sometimes usurped judicial powers as well; moreover, public discussion of political subjects was not allowed. The young advocate's ideas were of course founded upon Montesquieu, but he modified some of the doctrines of his original and showed that he had reflected as well as studied. A discourse on such a subject at such a time marks him out as one of the pioneers of the Revolution, and he who was so careless of his own achievements was always proud of this. "This little work offered no doubt a very feeble sketch of a great subject, but it breathed a passion for liberty and showed the first flight of a most independent spirit," he writes. And to his judges he said: "I was still at the age when all the noble passions are working in the human heart, when the seeds of reform and philosophy, sown long before, began to germinate. Their

¹ Casimir Royer, loc. cit., 433-4; André Duhamel, *Les Démêlés du Parlement du Dauphiné et de l'ordre des Avocats, 1780-81* (Grenoble, 1875); Rochas, *Biographie du Dauphiné*, Art. Revol.

² Rochas, *Biog. du Dauphiné*, Art. Servan; Augustin Perier, 40.

development was rapid, but I can boast of having outstripped the first rush towards liberty."

His paper had a great success among those who disliked the existing order; from that day he was looked upon as a man who would make his mark, and when troubles came the eyes of reformers turned to him naturally.¹

His early political feelings are expressed in the draft of a long letter to some real or imaginary Englishman, to whom he makes the lament that uncertainty over past, present, and future, "regrets for the natural rights of man, regrets for the sad effects of a government which seems to have made it its business to degrade one of the nations of the earth where nature had created everything for the glory and felicity of the human race—this is what it is easy for us to gather from the thorny study of our history, our legislation, our moral and political character. Repelled and discouraged from the study which is dearest to the good citizen by the uselessness of what it teaches, by the sad impressions which it leaves us, we lower our mind and character to servile speculation: for want of rights we study facts."²

Yet the study of "facts" was what he specially cultivated, and in his retrospect of 1784 he congratulates himself on the "growth of practice over theory".³ The truth is that, knowing himself to be by nature romantic, enthusiastic and speculative, and being afraid of these tendencies, he set himself to curb them. The means he chose were not always wise; he tried to think of things as they are and not as they ought to be, and in some of his written observations he assumes a disconcerting conviction that mankind is base, and that it is foolish to expect a high standard of any one. These attempts at worldly wisdom are in ludicrous contrast with his invariable conduct and feelings, and occasionally the true self breaks out, as in the remark: "Whatever people say about the influence of novels, it seems to me that I meet many more persons who are not romantic enough, than persons who are too much so."⁴

It is difficult to determine how much reputation he won

¹ Béranger, xvii-xviii; *Introduction*, 96; *Œuvres*, ii. 364.

² *A. N. W.* 13. 9.

³ Béranger, xi.

⁴ *A. N. W.* 15. *Registre* i. 10.

at the Bar. He was certainly highly thought of, but he did not rise to the top of his profession at once, as Servan, Savoye-Rollin and Mounier did, nor should we have expected it, for he was not the sort of man who starts ripe. He himself was aware that he had not found his work in life, and he writes in self-reproach : " The want of encouragement, of emulation, of a goal in the near future, have had more to do with the weakness, the uncertainty, the indolence of my mind and character, than anything else has. Did not my situation offer me some resources ? Yes, but my imagination was always turning me away from them and drawing me to objects in which I lacked equally proficiency, present hope, and all that steadies, encourages and fortifies." ¹

Yet he took the greatest pains with his legal work, and as soon as he returned home from the Courts sat down to criticize himself in writing. After one of his cases he says : " I suppressed my exordium because the part about the people was too long and that about the circumstances was too pompous and solemn ; I did well !—My remarks on the unexpected allegations of facts interrupted my narrative a little, I was told ; it would have been better to place them later. My peroration was thought declamatory."

After another, in which he had been defending some clients under age : " Too long, especially in the arguments ; they should have been treated with precision and simplicity, and not drawn out into periods ; this would even have produced more effect—The same things and especially the interesting ones were repeated too often. I spoke so much of my wards that finally, far from feeling sorry for them, the judges would perhaps have liked to beat them, they were so much bored with them."

Again : " I must work, think out my cases more, and then speak extempore or with very short extracts, like a man well broken in—I must practise doing this in my room—Must especially aim at clearness and brevity ; judges have a passion for this." ²

Two cases in which he was engaged have come down to us. The first is characteristic of Dauphiné.

¹ Béranger, xii.

² Ibid., xv, xvi.

In early almost legendary times, two woodcutters, named Bouillane and Richaud, rescued a Dauphin, who was hunting in a valley near Verchény, from a bear. They were ennobled as a reward, and founded two of the oldest families in Dauphiné. Their descendants were not only prolific but very poor; neighbours of the Tiers-état wished to make them pay their share of the Taille, and they were obliged more than once to prove their nobility in the law courts to escape doing so. Both families became Protestants, suffered persecution, and were condemned to lose their nobility in 1745. After this many of them left their old home, but the remainder plucked up courage at last and determined to get their privileges back. In 1783, after eight years of preliminary litigation during which the case came before the Parlement eleven times, they obtained leave to have it tried, and it was given to the younger Barnave. The result is not known.¹

The other case is known through a memorandum of seven pages by "Barnave fils", printed in 1787 and entitled: "Enquiries on the question whether the particle *or* keeps its disjunctive sense in the case of a trustee-ship to which the testator has appointed his brother or his family."²

Such cases were not calculated to call out the powers of a young man whose strength lay in treating questions from the point of view of principles and general interest, and for a short time he thought of becoming an advocate-general. Four generations of nobility were requisite, but the Parlement had the right of dispensing with this condition, and it was not the want of noble birth but the certainty that his Protestantism would stand in his way which made him give up the idea.

But he was still very young, with plenty of time before

¹ *Les Bouillane et les Richaud*, A. Lacroix; *Bulletin de la Société départementale d'Archéologie et de Statistique de la Drôme*, xii. 288, &c. (Valence, 1878). A memorandum, written by Barnave, was printed in 1787; it is clear and learned, but dry, says M. Lacroix, 302-3.

² E. Maignien; *Bibliographie Grenobloise*, no. 1413. (*Bulletin de l'Acad. Delphinale*, 3^{me} série, xviii, 1883.)

³ Béranger, xviii; *Inventaires sommaires des Archives; Archives départementales antérieures à 1790*, Isère, ii, série B, 5, no. 2325 (1862, &c.).

him, and fitted by disposition to enjoy all the blessings of his lot. Grenoble, beautiful among beautiful cities, with the Isère running through it and the mountains round it, was a centre of intellectual life; the famous library had lately been started by public subscription, there was a literary society, a free school of art, a botanic garden, besides the fine public one. The Dauphinois were a pleasant and sociable people; the 'good company' of Grenoble, no longer exclusive, was noted for its urbanity at a time when manners were exquisite, and the most honourable portion of this good company welcomed the young advocate for his talents, his social gifts and his high character. He learnt there to add to the courtesy which springs from natural refinement the polish acquired by the habit of moving in well-bred circles, and gained the grace of manner combined with a certain dignity and gravity which distinguished him. But though he liked society well he liked home better still.¹

His interests were varied, and a book bill for the years 1787 and 1788 shows him purchasing, besides all the political publications which were then appearing, legal works, memoranda on celebrated cases, travels, books on riding, political economy and miscellaneous subjects, an Italian grammar, a Languedocian dictionary, Miss Burney's *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, and two copies of Sterne's sermons.²

He was an admirer of Sterne, as all cultivated Frenchmen of the day were, and one of his chief reasons was the curious one, that Sterne threw interest over the humdrum round of daily life.³ Conduct in this daily round seemed to him of great importance, as will be seen by a letter which he wrote to his sister Julie on Oct. 14th, 1786, when he was just twenty-five, on the very eve of the Revolution. His sisters were in the country and were evidently shy young women, dreading the attentions they would have to pay to some dull and formidable visitors.

"Does the dangerous abbé see you often?" he asks; "Have you got your young soldiers together?—I imagine that the

¹ *Procès-verbal des États de Dauphiné assemblés à Romans*, 16, 25, 26; Béranger, xiii, cvii.

² *A. N. W.* 12.

³ *Œuvres*, iii. 275, &c.

presence of my father brings a little gravity into your amusements from time to time. Of course you have gala days, you dress in your best, you hold yourselves very upright, which brings you credit and happiness ; de Presle is in her element and Adélaïde must be charmed with the pleasures of Vif. No doubt she sees there on the great days a dozen sky-blue beauties, to whom I burnt incense last year ; at least I suppose they are there still."

After an uncomplimentary description of the visitors he gives some excellent advice: "One must learn to console, to soothe, to cheer, to humour the melancholy and uneasy moods of one's friends ; learn to be, as well as to wish to be, of service to them, to conquer a little timidity and coldness, to practise oneself in movement, in doing things of one's own accord, and in helping the weakness of others out of the superfluity of one's own strength. There are great satisfactions in all this, down to self-satisfaction.—And then after boredom and constraint one returns with a greater pleasure to liberty and ease ; one has learnt to secure the real enjoyments of life by one's sacrifices, to make new ones for oneself, and to be able to do without them bravely ; one has begun an apprenticeship the usefulness of which will be confirmed every moment of one's life." He recommends as methods of entertainment, long walks, cheerful breakfasts, milk for lunch, and doings gay but not noisy ; and exhorts his girl cousins not to shirk anything and to behave exactly as if they were his sisters.¹

He was quite ready to burn incense before sky-blue beauties, whatever they may be, but he was too critical to be susceptible and tradition connects no love-affairs with his name. His morals were irreproachable, says Bérenger, speaking of him at the end of his public career, and this is so well known and so widely acknowledged that there is no need to insist on it. The depraved section of Grenoble society had, however, left some impression on him ; he generalized too hastily from the examples of "elegant corruption" which he had seen in his youth, and formed a contemptuous opinion of women in general which he expressed very harshly in some of his notes. His practice did not agree with his theory and he looked on

¹ *Œuvres*, iv. 322-5.

the women he knew in an entirely different way. No man was ever more devoted to his mother and sisters, his friendship for the ladies of his circle was cordial and admiring, and it is probable that an early, romantic and unfortunate attachment was the reason why a man of such domestic habits never married. Even his theoretic contempt had a redeeming feature ; he thought a good education as necessary for women as for men and put down most of their defects to the bad one they usually received.¹

Such was Barnave before the Revolution ; a rising young man, conscious of uncommon abilities for which he saw no outlet, sensible of the degradation into which his country had sunk, who had been led by good principles, a cheerful, equable temper and sound common-sense to get the best he could out of things as they were, to work his hardest at a profession he did not care for, and to make home happy.

It was a youth as unlike the turbulent and uneasy spring-time of genius as well could be. Yet all the while he was unconsciously fitting himself to do what soaring souls who beat their wings against the bars of fate only dream, and before he was twenty-eight he had spoken in the *Jeu de Paume*, crossed swords with Mirabeau, and become one of the leading members of a great revolutionary assembly.

¹ Béranger, cvii, cxiv ; *Œuvres*, iii. 259.

CHAPTER III

1788

ON December 21st, 1786, the King summoned the Notables, persuaded to that step by Calonne, the great dilapidator of the finances, who was at his wits' end for an expedient to raise money.

Barnave has described the change this event made in his life :

“ Ideas which had occupied me while they were still only the objects of a barren curiosity, absorbed me entirely when public events began to surround them with a little hope. After the convocation of the Notables I applied myself only to political subjects ; the thought of seeing my country free and the caste to which I belonged raised from the state of humiliation to which an insensate government seemed more than ever to condemn it, exalted all the faculties of my soul and filled me with ardour and enthusiasm. I devoted my existence to the cause of liberty and consecrated all my time to work which might render me capable of serving it.”¹

The struggle between the Parlements and the Government which ensued upon Calonne's failure to make the Notables accept reforms in taxation, led directly to the movement in Dauphiné with which the Revolution opened. It was a movement which provided France with the model of a constitutional struggle. The Dauphinois displayed not only a talent for political organization but much political acumen. They managed their campaign themselves, without the aid of outside influences, and they had won their battle and vindicated the claims of the Tiers-état before Siéyes published his famous pamphlet. They brought to the States-General not only hopes and resolves, but a tradition. A study of their records shows

¹ *Introduction*, 96-7. So much has been said about Freemasonry and the Revolution that it is worth noting that neither Barnave nor Mounier were ever Freemasons, (Mounier, *De l'influence attribuée aux philosophes, francs-maçons, &c.*, 177-8); and this though there was a Lodge at Grenoble which was an active political centre.

that they would never have been satisfied with less than complete self-government, and that those who fancy that timely concessions from the King and a wiser conduct of affairs by Necker would have arrested the Constituent Assembly short of this, in its early days, underrate both the firmness and the ability of the men with whom the King and Necker had to deal.

Barnave was one of the foremost men in the assemblies of Dauphiné and the history of the movement belongs to his life ; yet we cannot enter into it here. For one thing, we know so little of what he did individually that we should lose sight of the personal side ; for another, the brief, dry statement of facts, which is all that space would allow, would only spoil the story. We must confine ourselves to a few words, and those chiefly meant to elucidate his early writings and the circumstances under which he came to the front.

Calonne's successor, Loménie de Brienne, tried to get the Parlements to register the acts which the Notables had declined to accept ; the Paris Parlement refused to register certain taxes, on the ground that taxes could not be imposed without the consent of the nation, and demanded the convocation of the States-General ; other Parlements followed suit with various acts of resistance.

The conflict in Dauphiné began over the refusal of the Parlement to register unconditionally an act creating a Provincial Assembly—a kind of County Council. The Government was setting up such assemblies in all the ' généralités ' which had no Estates. The measure was a reform, an attempt to allay rising discontent by granting a limited amount of self-government on the model of the old Estates, and most of the Parlements accepted it. But the Provincial Assemblies differed from the Estates in one essential particular ; the Estates existed by right of the people, the Provincial Assemblies by grace of the king. Dauphiné saw this and would have none of them.

The continuous resistance of the Parlements to the measures of the ministers was bringing about a deadlock in the government of the country, and Loménie de Brienne resolved to clear the air by a *coup d'état*. Edicts depriving the Parlements of their right of registration, their power and their prestige, and

introducing judicial reforms to court popularity, were prepared in secret ; they were to be sprung upon the Parlements almost simultaneously and registration was to be enforced.

At Grenoble on May 10th, 1788, the Palace was seized by the troops of the garrison, and the judges were kept prisoners while the edicts, ten in number, were inscribed in their registers. They regarded this enforced registration as illegal, and though forbidden to meet and ordered into vacation they did meet in private, to draw up stirring protests which they contrived to publish. Grenoble came to the help of the Parlement with memorials and supplications to the Government, although all discussion of the edicts was prohibited, and the public exasperation was so great that the Governor and Intendant hesitated to exile the judges by *lettres de cachet*, as they had been instructed to do if they should prove recalcitrant.

At this juncture Barnave ' did not hesitate to fling himself first into the breach ' with his once famous pamphlet, " Meaning of the Edicts registered by military force in the Parlement of Grenoble on May 10th ",¹ one of the earliest tracts of the Revolution ; and in the forefront of his pamphlet was the new idea of an united France :

" When a people is deceived by those who govern it, the citizens owe it to one another to put their thoughts in common, in order that they may enlighten each other reciprocally and oppose a combined and uniform resistance to common disaster.

" I will attempt to sketch rapid views of all these laws ; I shall set forth whatever relates to the whole State more extensively than that which only concerns my province ; for I regard the prejudices which divide us as a great evil, and I believe that the country of a Frenchman ought to be the whole of France." ²

It has been said that this idea was expressed thus clearly for the first time in Barnave's pamphlet.³ Whether this were so or no, it is certain that the manner in which local interests

¹ *Introduction*, 97 ; " *Esprit des Édits enregistrés militairement au Parlement de Grenoble, le 10 mai 1788.*" Correctly reprinted *Œuvres*, iv. 381-413.

² *Œuvres*, iv. 383.

³ A. Chérest, *La Chute de l'ancien Régime*, ii. 7. (Coulommiers, 1884.)

were subordinated to the general good throughout the Dauphinois uprising, struck the rest of France forcibly and gave the movement its special influence ; while as to Barnave, his love of French unity is the key to his political conduct.

The pamphlet goes shortly through the edicts, criticizing each in the clear manner peculiar to the author, and the following passages are of special interest. To certain partisans of the Provincial Assemblies, who maintained that even if these did fall under government influence, there was always a possibility of insurrection, he answered :

“Doubtless insurrection is the resource common to all oppressed peoples, but it is the last and the worst of all. The merit of a constitution does not consist in supporting itself by insurrection, but in ensuring and perpetuating liberty without this terrible aid ; and if the zeal and firmness which our administrators promise us are only going to lead us, in the last resort, to take up arms, I do not believe that this is the wish of the Government nor of the people.”

But force must be used to make the ministers convoke the States-General. “Force will bring them to it, and this force you must only exercise by refusing, without exception, to let new subsidies be established.”

There is a lament over the Parlements, last refuge of “dying liberty” when, “after a long interruption of the national assemblies”, she “is on the point of being overwhelmed by tyranny.”

“Justice will be no more administered by these majestic tribunals, invested with the confidence of the nation, objects of the wonder of foreigners ; these bodies raised above petty considerations by the glory of their origin, the grandeur of their prerogatives, even by their pretensions and their pride.”

And later : “The Parlements are the depositaries of the national laws, the supreme officials of jurisdiction. Commissioned and authorised by the nation to examine the laws to which it is to consent, they watch over their execution and claim the rights of the people in the absence of the States-General ;¹ elementary parts of the constitution, composed of

¹ The claim to represent the nation in the absence of the States-General was made by the Parlements. Barnave remarks in some

irremovable members, they cannot be destroyed or changed but by the same power which forms and changes governments."

The end is an appeal to all Frenchmen.

"Are we no longer the first of nations? Is it for our dishonour that we were born in these fertile lands, amongst the gifts of all climates? O Frenchmen! nature implanted in your breasts the noble frankness of the North, the fiery courage of the South; you received from your ancestors the gifts of genius, the force which inspires respect, the sweet and loyal virtues which temper courage; they transmitted liberty to you!—What have you done with so many gifts? Pressed down beneath the yoke you look with sterile wonder at the efforts of human genius among a people which despises you! Ah! deign to be free and their glory will be no more."¹

The clergy are addressed: "O ministers of a religion to which Europe owed the abolition of civil slavery, finish your work, proclaim to-day the re-establishment of political liberty; let those immortal laws, which recall the origin of men and prove their equality, speak!"

Nobles, Tiers-état, soldiers, creditors of the State are all called upon in turn; the King himself:

"And thou whom France received with tears, thou who for long wast her hope, who gavest her promise that the reign of her good Henri would return—the evils which are heaped upon her in thy name have not yet been able to extinguish her love for thee; never would she believe thee the author of them; she has never wept over them without weeping for the prince who shares them. Open thine eyes at last, kind

early notes: "The real right of representing the nation which the Parlement can claim is, that it alone has a voice, a force of enlightenment and, in general, something to go upon in order to do this. But as, by natural right and for the good of every one, the nation has to be defended and represented, he who can do it must." *A.N. W.* 15, *Registre* ii. 39.

¹ Augustin Perier and the biographical dictionaries speak of Barnave's early 'Anglomania'. There seems no trace of it; he was always critical of the English and his view of the commercial treaty between France and Great Britain is: "A rival nation devours our substance with impunity, under the shelter of a treaty guaranteed by our weakness." (*Esprit des Édits*, 408.)

and feeling King ; see the profound abyss into which unworthy servants have precipitated thine empire ; see the baneful results of the blind and limitless authority which they have claimed for themselves in thy name," &c.¹

This appeal may surprise those who imagine that the Revolution began with antipathy to the monarchy, but the language only echoes the ordinary feeling of the time. It was a commonplace that the throne and the Tiers-état were natural allies, and this view was shared by the monarch himself.

The pamphlet was printed secretly, by night, with the help of three Councillors of the Parlement. It was, of course, anonymous, and in getting it printed and circulated Barnave took his life in his hand. It was ready on June 7th. "I distributed it in the streets of Grenoble the very day when there flowed in my native town the first blood that was shed in France for the Revolution," he writes.² The pamphlet was not responsible for the bloodshed, even indirectly, it did not appear till after this had taken place.

The *lettres de cachet* were served upon the judges on June 7th. It was market day, the city was full, and the dismayed crowds conceived the wild idea of preventing the departure of their Parlement by force. A long battle between the people and the troops of the garrison followed, in which the troops, who were forbidden to fire—an order which only one company disobeyed—charged with sword and bayonet and the people replied with paving-stones and with tiles torn from the roofs. Hence the name by which the day is known, 'the day of Tiles'. The people had the best of it, the Governor³ was compelled to ask the First President to call the Parlement together, and the riot subsided. Two or three persons had been killed outright and a great many wounded. There was no renewal of the disturbance.

The day of Tiles had been a spontaneous outbreak of the people, regretted by the better-educated ; the conflict was now taken up by the whole population in a constitutional manner

¹ *Œuvres*, iv. 389, 394, 402, 406-7, 408-9, 411-12.

² *Introduction*, 97 ; E. Maignien, *Bibliographie historique du Dauphiné*, no. 70.

³ The duc de Tonnerre, son of Madame Barnave's enemy.

and Barnave's pamphlet was as fuel to the flame. On the 9th the Governor wrote to Loménie de Brienne: "The pamphlet of which I send you a copy herewith will leave you no doubts as to the project which has been formed of a general rising in this capital, and who knows how far it may go? This writing, under the title of *Esprit des Édits*, was distributed with profusion on the night of the 7th and yesterday." . . . "Already the seditious pamphlet is spreading [in the province]; peasant women come to get it; there is no doubt that the curés of the parishes, on the invitation made to them, will from their pulpits dispose all their parishioners to rise up against their masters, under the specious and seductive pretext presented in it of making themselves free."¹

The pamphlet went on spreading; it was ascribed at first to Savoye-Rollin, but the real author soon became known to his fellow-citizens. He was not denounced to the authorities, who were doing their best to discover him, for there were no traitors among the Dauphinois and even the police were on the side of the Parlement.²

On July 19th the pamphlet was condemned to suppression as incendiary and unpatriotic at a special meeting of the 'Grand Baillage', or superior Law-Court of Bourg-en-Bresse. The magistrates, who opined that no Frenchman could have written it, criticized it at great length, and their 'Judgement' was printed as an antidote.³

The *Esprit des Édits* was not Barnave's only important contribution to the revolutionary literature of the time. He drew up an address to the King, written shortly after the day

¹ Duc de Tonnerre to Loménie de Brienne, *La Journée des Tuiles*, 89-90. (Part VI of *Recueil de documents relatifs à l'histoire politique, etc., du Dauphiné*. Grenoble, 1881 etc.)

² E. Maignien; *Dict. des ouvrages anonymes et pseudonymes. Bibliothèque historique du Dauphiné* (Grenoble, 1892), no. 869; A. Perier, 68; Letter of Caze de la Bove, Intendant, June 27, and of de Tonnerre, June 30, Champollion-Figeac, *Les États*, i. 416, 420.

³ *Jugement du Grand Baillage de Bourg-en-Bresse, qui supprime un écrit intitulé 'Esprit des Édits' etc.*, Bourg, 1788, 23 pp. Maignien, *Bibliographie historique* no. 164, gives three editions; there appear to be two others in the British Museum. Maignien, loc. cit. no. 70, gives seven editions of the *Esprit des Édits*.

of Tiles, called "Très respectueuses supplications que présentent au Roi les notables citoyens de la ville de Grenoble"; the MS. in his hand exists in the Grenoble library.¹ There is, as far as we know, no record that it was adopted at any meeting, though from internal evidence it must have been written for a meeting on July 2; but it was widely circulated and was printed and reprinted in political *Recueils*. It is the best epitome of the attitude of Dauphiné, and reaches the high-water mark of daring language under the Ancien Régime.

It begins by deploring the day of Tiles, but explains it by the people's dejection and misery; "the least enlightened class of your subjects forgot, in its despair, the endless resources that we have in your justice." The whole address breathes loyalty, but the King is spoken to with audacious freedom. Your subjects, he is told, have rights, so have you; "forms have been established to secure their rights and yours. If the power of making new laws went far enough to take these rights from them and to infringe these forms, the result would be that you would be master of their lives, of their persons, and of their goods, and that Providence, which is just, would have created all for the sake of one.—Your heart, Sire, tells you already that this cannot be."

The King is reminded of the privileges of Dauphiné, and assured that while the Dauphinois will defend his rights they will also insist on their own.

"Our property shall not be wasted to serve as a prey for the traitors who have deceived you.

"We will never be judged by dishonoured men.

"The privileges which we shall be ready to sacrifice for the good of the nation, in a general assembly, shall not be taken from us without our consent.

"Our heads are yours, Sire, but our laws are dearer to us than our heads."

¹ E. Maignien, *Dict. des ouvrages anonymes et pseudonymes*, no. 2511. A. Perier, 60, says that it was addressed by the notables to the king, but does not attach it to any meeting. M. Lanzac de Laborie, who attributes it to Mounier, implies in his *Mounier* that it was adopted at the 14 June meeting, but there is no trace of this in the printed Procès-verbal. The 'Supplications' are in Barnave's style, not in Mounier's.

The days are past when ministers could divide the nation in order to oppress it ; “ The provinces, closely united, remember that if they separate their claims they will only fall into slavery. All classes are bound together in fraternal concord. . . . Where, then, will your ministers find means to force twenty million men into doing what they do not wish ? ”

The King is bidden, rather than begged, to withdraw the edicts, to summon the States-General, to summon the Estates of the province, to set the citizens illegally detained free, and finally, to “ grant us the greatest of benefits, that of being always able to love you.”¹

But Louis threw away love as recklessly as his ministers squandered money.

Barnave gives this short account of the movement in Dauphiné : “ The spontaneous convocations, the meetings of the towns, the courageous representations of the city of Grenoble and of the province of Dauphiné were soon celebrated throughout the kingdom ; they helped, together with the courage of some other provinces, to hasten the moment of the Revolution ; they had, above all, this peculiarity, that while everywhere else only the aristocracy was as yet in revolt against the throne, the province of Dauphiné demanded the rights of the third Order, and by putting forward the great questions of the doubling of the Tiers and of the vote by head, laid the first foundations of a democratic revolution.

“ M. Mounier, who played the first part in these movements, acquired a consideration which made him for a short time the arbiter of the States-General ; as for myself, I shall by no means claim a share in them greater than that of each of my fellow citizens ; but I may be allowed to be proud of having been elected a deputy at the age of twenty-seven, after trials which only real courage could resist, and in circumstances where perhaps it needed as much energy to support the popular movement as it would need to-day to resist it.”²

He puts his own claims modestly ; the spirit of the Revolution made the men who were imbued with it glad to sink their identity in that of the body to which they belonged. It was their

¹ See *Moniteur*, xxxii. 547-8, where the address is correctly reprinted.

² *Introduction*, 97-8.

pride to work together, and this is why it is impossible to write of one without saying something of all, for a biography which did not respect this generous solidarity could be no true picture.

The young man who stepped at once and by common consent into the position of leader, Jean-Joseph Mounier, secretary of the 'Three Orders' and afterwards of the Estates of Dauphiné, was born at Grenoble on Nov. 12th, 1758, the son of a much respected tradesman. He received a good education, showed eminent abilities from the first, and when, at twenty-one, he was called to the Bar, rose at once to the top rank. But the life of an advocate was too exacting both for his weak voice and his delicate health, and in 1783 he bought the office of *Juge royal* in the lower Court of Grenoble, an office which only obliged him to sit in alternate years. He gave his years of leisure to the study of politics, and the friendship of an Englishman drew his attention more particularly to the British Constitution, for which he conceived a strong predilection. He married young, and in a happy circle of family and friends was an affectionate and delightful companion; but he was apt to be cold and stiff with strangers.¹ His face, with high forehead, luminous eyes, and square, determined chin, is prepossessing; his character and principles were of the highest, his honour scrupulous, his resolution unbending. Barnave justly calls him "imperious", but during his early days in Dauphiné what was afterwards obstinacy appeared only as firmness, and his conduct and official writings showed an admirable and almost flawless wisdom. He came to perfection too soon, and his very success, joined to the determined habit of mind necessary to a man who has to struggle with weak health, tended to make him too rigidly self-confident. Politics had drawn him and Barnave together and they were friends, but do not seem to have been really intimate.

The Government, determined to put down the agitation in Dauphiné by force, marched troops to Grenoble and appointed the stern old Maréchal de Vaulx to command them. None the less meeting after meeting was held and resolution after resolution passed, and the whole province was so unanimous and so determined that de Vaulx, foreseeing a holocaust, shrank

¹ Lanzac de Laborie, *Un Royaliste libéral*; J. J. Mounier, 5-8, 337.

from carrying out his instructions. The most important meetings were two on June 14th and July 2nd, when the 'notable citizens' of Grenoble joined the Town Council, and invited the Three Orders of the province to send representatives to a big meeting. The meeting on July 2nd was the first which Barnave attended; ¹ his father had been at the previous one. The province claimed the right of meeting in 'Three Orders' by its constitution; the more venturesome communities chose representatives, and the first meeting of the 'Three Orders' took place at the château of Vizille, eight miles from Grenoble, on July 21st, almost under the guns of de Vaulx's troops.²

The moral effect on France was so powerful that the ministers changed their tactics and abandoned force for guile. The Three Orders had adjourned till Sept. 1st; the Government commanded the province to elect another assembly of the Three Orders, which was to meet at Romans about that date, in order to discuss the formation of the Estates—and nothing else. Here again Barnave took the lead; and at a meeting of the Town Council of Grenoble and some members of the Three Orders, on Aug. 13th, although Mounier was present, it was Barnave and another young advocate, Paul Didier, who drew up the vigorous resolutions which were adopted. These laid down that the Government's commanded assembly was illegal, because the Three Orders alone had the right to propose changes in the formation of the Estates.³

¹ It was resolved on 14 June to make certain demands of the Government, and these are made in the "Très respectueuses supplications", but this address was not presented on 2 July, when a milder letter by Mounier and two others was adopted at once. See the Procès-verbaux of these meetings, both printed.

² Students may be puzzled by an assertion of M. Champollion-Figeac (*États*, i. 214, 456, and ii. Introduction ix. and 6, 7), that neither Barnave nor his father were present at Vizille. It will be found, on examination, to rest solely on the assumption, contradicted by the Procès-verbal, that of the Tiers-état only the 187 citizens representing Grenoble attended. The statement has been repeated by other writers and I have seen the Procès-verbal incorrectly reprinted in a manner which supports it. It has been added that *fear* kept Barnave away!

³ M. Champollion-Figeac prints the Procès-verbal; *Les États*, ii. 14-21. Cf. Lanzac de Laborie, loc. cit. 22; A. Perier, 85; Maignien, *Bibliog. historique*, no. 188.

Barnave did more ; when this bold protest produced no effect and there were signs that the ministers were again about to resort to force, he wrote a small pamphlet, called "Avis aux Campagnes du Dauphiné", in which he exhorted the country-folk, in uncompromising language, to send deputies to the right assembly.

"The assembly at Romans has been invented by the ministers to hinder the assembly on the 1st September, of which they are afraid on account of their robberies ; and in order that they may annul all that was done by the meeting at Vizille." . . .

"God wishes that we should be faithful to the King, but he also wishes that kings should govern their people with justice ; and when a good king is deceived by bad ministers, God wishes that the people should do all it can to hinder the evil the ministers are working, and to enlighten the king.

"God is just and good ; he does not wish the wicked to triumph over the good, nor that two or three should eat up the substance of all, and that we should suffer without complaining."¹

Four hundred copies of this little tract were printed, but were not distributed,² for before they could be put into circulation the glad news came, on Aug. 29th, of the fall of Loménie de Brienne.

He was succeeded by Necker, the hope of France, and conciliation was the order of the day. A compromise was arrived at ; the Three Orders met at St. Robert on Sept. 1st, but it was only to adjourn to Romans for the 5th. The King withdrew the edicts, restored the Parlements, and fixed the meeting of the States-General for January 1789. The date was afterwards altered to April 27th, and Versailles was appointed as the place.

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. Pamphlet of 3 pp.

² This appears from a book-bill of 1788, *A. N. W.* 12. Several other anonymous tracts have been attributed to Barnave ; the question is probably settled by the small set of printed pamphlets seized with his papers (see Chap. XXXIV). They are : 1. *Esprit des Édits* ; 2. *Coup d'œil sur la lettre de M. de Calonne* ; 3. *Profession de foi d'un Militaire* (1788) ; 4. *Avis aux Campagnes du Dauphiné* ; 5. *Au Rédacteur du Mercure de France*, par un Dauphinois, 4 pp., written about Oct. 1788 ; 6. Speech of 15 July 1791 : (2. and 6. bear his name). There is also the *Procès-verbal* of 2 July 1788, the first meeting he attended ; and "Délibérations de la ville de Vienne", 13 and 28 Sept. 1788, which seems to have nothing to do with him.

The Three Orders met twice at Romans (Sept. 5-28th and Nov. 1-8th), and the Estates, elected at the end of November, sat there from Dec. 1st to Jan. 16th.¹

In all these assemblies the three Orders worked together in amity and concord, carrying out in practice the three great principles which they demanded of the Government to observe in the formation of the States-General. These were : 1. That the representatives of the Tiers-état should be equal in number to those of the other two Orders together ; this was called the 'double representation' or 'doubling' of the Tiers-état. 2. That the Three Orders should debate in common. 3. That they should vote in common. Precedent varied on these

¹ Barnave appears on the lists of the Assembly at Vizille as elected with his father by Saillans, and with Mounier by Saint-Maurice-en-Valgodémar, a village near Mount Pelvoux ; in the lists of the Assembly at Romans, as elected with his father by Saillans, by himself for Barri and Verchény, and with Mounier and Imbert des Granges, a popular advocate, for the united mountain-villages of Clémence d'Ambel, Guillaume-Pérouse, Villard-la-Loubière and Saint-Maurice-en-Valgodémar. The Tiers-état reduced their numbers and re-arranged constituencies, and he became a member for the district of Montélimar ; his father retired. See *Procès-verbaux*. During the first meeting of the Three Orders at Romans, it was resolved that a letter of gratitude and supplication should be sent to the King. This letter, adopted on 13 Sept., seems to have been drawn up by Barnave ; M. Rochas, in his *Biographie du Dauphiné*, Article Barnave, says that he possesses a rough draft in Barnave's hand. The letter, which contains more exhortations than gratitude, is clear and dignified ; it gives an excellent résumé of the situation and demands a States-General freely elected and numerous enough to be representative. (*Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée Générale des Trois-Ordres de la Province de Dauphiné, tenue à Romans par permission du Roi*. Grenoble, 1788. Large edition, 139 pp., p. 90-6).

In the estates Barnave was one of the seven members for the district of Montélimar, in which Verchény is situated. He must have been in possession of some of the family property there, as only property-owners were eligible. The election was in two degrees, and a property qualification was required of voters.

Barnave was on all the Commissions appointed at Romans by the Three Orders, and by the Estates, for their important business, except on that for drawing up the 'mandate' for the deputies, a Commission which did not act ; but he never reported for any of them, nor for the 'bureau' to which he belonged. There is no record of the debates of these assemblies, in which he must have spoken frequently.

points, both in provincial Estates and in the States-General, and politicians who allowed the first were not always ready to concede the third, called the vote 'by head'. The alternative was the vote 'by Order', when each Order voted separately, and the question was decided by the majority among the three—a method which rendered the 'doubling' of the Tiers a mockery, since the privileged orders could always outvote it.

By an edict of Dec. 27th the Government granted the 'double representation'; the two other great questions were left in suspense.

The Estates began to elect their deputies to the States-General on Jan. 1st, another act of independence, for the King's sanction had not yet arrived. These were the first elections in France.

There were 144 members of the Estates, and they were joined for the purpose of the election by an equal number of supplementary deputies, chosen by the province *ad hoc*. This peculiar method is said to have been Mounier's invention. As the Three Orders always voted together the deputies of each Order were elected by the whole assembly, and thus became the deputies, not of an Order but of Dauphiné.

The method followed in the election was this: each voter made a list of all the deputies he wished elected and put it in the ballot-box; the lists were then opened, and men whose names appeared on more than half of them were declared to be elected.

Making lists and counting names was a lengthy business; the counting was suspended during the night, and the result of the first turn of the ballot was announced on Friday, Jan. 2nd, 1789. Eleven men had been elected, all by such large majorities that they evidently possessed the confidence of all three Orders. They were: one cleric, the aged Archbishop of Vienne, President of the Estates; three nobles: the young marquis de Blacons, the marquis de Langon, the comte de Lablache; seven of the Tiers-état: Mounier, for whom everyone voted (he had no vote, as secretary)—he had been previously elected by acclamation, but had insisted on keeping to the rules; Delacour d'Ambésieux, an elderly advocate of Romans; Barthellemy d'Orbanne, a learned jurisconsult,

who was already afraid of the Revolution and refused ; Pison du Galland fils, *Juge épiscopal* at Grenoble, an eminent lawyer ; Béranger, a lawyer at Valence, father of Barnave's biographer ; Barnave fils ; and Bertrand de Montfort, a judge at Buis, whom the Pope had made a count.

The rest of the deputation, elected on the same and four following days, were : the abbés de Dolomieu, Saint-Albin and Colaud de la Salcette, the only member of the deputation elected to the Convention ; comte Antoine d'Agoult ; the comte de Virieu ; the comte de Morges, who had presided at Vizille ; the baron de Chaléon, Councillor in the Parlement ; the comte de Marsane, nobles : Pierre Revol ; Bignan de Coyrol, a merchant ; Charles Chabroud, advocate at Vienne ; Guy Blancard, a Protestant ; Allard du Plantier, a retired advocate ; Cheynet, mayor of Montélimar, who took Barthelémy's place. This made four clergy, eight nobles, and twelve of the Tiers-état or Commons, as they sometimes called themselves.

It was customary to elect 'suppléants', extra deputies who filled up places rendered vacant by death or resignation. Four of the six now elected succeeded to seats before the year was out ; two nobles, de Delay d'Agier, the popular and patriotic mayor of Romans, who had been imprisoned during the agitation, and the chevalier de Murinais ; two of the Commons, Richard, an advocate, mayor of Crest, and Grand de Champrouet, a judge of Briançon.¹

Barnave was the youngest of the deputation, Murinais being two years older. They were a distinguished set of men. The Archbishop, Mounier, Barnave, and Chabroud became Presidents of the National Assembly ; so did de Virieu, but he had to resign, on account of a protest which he had signed. Pison du Galland was a prominent member in the early days, de Delay d'Agier in the later ; six others were members of committees. All the nobles, except de Delay, who was a friend of Barnave's, left the popular side sooner or later, as did Revol and Bertrand de Montfort. Murinais speedily became one of the noisiest interrupters on the Right, but with this exception those who were no speakers held their tongues,

¹ See *Procès-verbal*, 124, &c.

like men of sense. Revol never spoke, in spite of his reputation for eloquence and power of repartee.

Dauphiné drew up no *cahiers* detailing desired reforms, as other elective bodies did; a short and simple 'mandate', the work of Mounier, filled their place.

It bade the deputies insist on the three points: double representation of the Tiers, debate in common, vote by head. Until these were definitely decreed they were not to vote on any other proposal. If the three points were decreed, and in that case only, they were given a special mandate to concur in procuring for France a constitution which should "ensure for ever the stability of the rights of the monarch and those of the French nation", the inviolability of personal liberty, the supremacy of the law, the control of the States-General over all loans and taxes; a constitution "which shall not permit any law to be established without the consent of the representatives of the people, gathered together in frequent and periodical national assemblies". They were given a special mandate for the reform of the administration of justice. They were forbidden to debate on subsidies unless circumstances imperiously required it, before the bases of the constitution were fixed. After this they were to pay special attention to finance. If "salutary resolutions" were not taken they were to reserve the rights of the province. There were a few other provisions; one, added later, related to the guaranteeing of property and the assuring those who might be deprived of it, for the public good, of an indemnity. Beyond this they had a free hand.¹

Before leaving the Estates we will mention an answer which they gave to the Universities of Valence and Toulouse, because it illustrates the new love of an united France which inspired the Dauphinois, and lays stress on a principle of representative government, sometimes forgotten, which the Constituent Assembly had much at heart. The Universities asked for advice as to whether they should claim a right to send representatives to the States-General. The Estates replied that if bodies, however distinguished, were to send their representatives to the States-General, this assembly

¹ *Procès-verbal*, 118-21, 122-3, 131-2.

would be composed, not, as it ought to be, of "representatives of the nation", but of "deputies of various bodies"; "that Representatives ought to forget the bodies of which they are members, the place they inhabit, the profession they follow, and adopt the whole of France for their country; that the rights of bodies and of individuals must only be protected in the States-General in so far as they are compatible with the maintenance of order and with the public happiness." ¹

¹ *Procès-verbal*, 146-7. Although the Government regulations, issued later, permitted the three Orders to elect their deputies in common, the example of Dauphiné was not followed.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE EVE OF THE STATES-GENERAL

IN the spring Barnave published a short pamphlet which is of much interest, for it shows his opinions at the time, and his opinions can almost always be considered typical of those of the Constituent Assembly. This "Glance at M. de Calonne's Letter" is dated March 28th.¹ Calonne, who had taken refuge from impeachment in England, had published an open "Letter to the King", a good-sized book in which he scolded the King for making concessions, attacked Necker, and carried his flighty impudence so far as to hope that he, Calonne, might become a member of the States-General—he sometimes calls it the National Assembly—that he might be able to give advice on Finance.²

For ten months it had rained pamphlets, and Barnave says naïvely in a little preface, that he knows Calonne's letter is hardly worth refuting; but "at a time when the satiety of readers is a great obstacle to spreading one's ideas, it is excusable to use the celebrity of a name which has done so much harm, to draw attention to observations which have no other motive than the desire to do good." We will leave his refutation of Calonne alone and speak of more important points.

First; the open-mindedness of his attitude must be remarked. Like the great majority of the deputies, he did not come to the States-General with a whole political system in his head, but with a certain number of fixed principles. With these for foundation he was ready to be enlightened both by other men's ideas and by experience. As he put it himself

¹ *Coup d'œil sur la lettre de M. de Calonne*, par M. Barnave, Député de la Province de Dauphiné aux États généraux. Dauphiné, 28 mars 1789, 29 pp. 8vo. Notes among his papers show that he originally projected a much larger work.

² *Lettre adressée au Roi*, par M. de Calonne. Le 9 février 1789. Londres, 296 pp. It appeared on 8 March; Luchet, *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de 1789*, i. 151.

when, somewhere about June 1790, a correspondent had asked him what his and his friends' opinions on some undecided points of the constitution were :

" I must repeat, sir, what I have already had the honour of telling you ; that is, that the isolated opinions of a few men are of little importance, especially when they are not the result of public discussions, and that even though my own opinions seem to me to be fixed about certain groundworks, they are not and cannot be so upon a large number of subordinate questions."¹ This is the spirit of the *Coup d'œil*.

Again ; for him all liberty must be founded on and ruled by law. He begins by assuring readers whom his frequent use of the words ' people ' and ' liberty ' may alarm, that by ' people ' he means the whole nation, and that ' liberty ' must be interpreted in the sense of the ' constitutional principles ' of which his pamphlet is full.²

Again ; he sets the national claim to freedom and self-government on a double basis, the rights of man and historical rights. The liberalism of the earlier revolutionaries contained a vein of conservatism which made them desirous to preserve whatever was good in the past and to support their innovations, when possible, with an appeal to precedent. This is clearly expressed in Barnave's pamphlet :

" The ancient right of the Franks, the inalienable right of all peoples, the right without which all others are nothing, and which essentially distinguishes the citizen from the slave—the right of consenting to the laws which rule us—is written in the annals of the monarchy as it is in the code of nature and in the inmost feelings of all who have not lost the stamp of their own dignity." . . . " The exercise of the right at length disappeared with the national assemblies, but the right itself could not die." ³

Again ; he has no idea whatever of changing the monarchical form of government. He treats as absurd Calonne's supposition that the Tiers-état, " the natural allies of royalty," would wish to take from the Crown its " legitimate share in legislation ". " The essential principle of the monarchy lies in the partition of legislation between the National Body and the

¹ A. N. W. 13. 204. Draft of letter. ² *Coup d'œil*, p. 2. ³ *Ibid.* 9, 11.

Prince, sole depository of the executive power"; and this principle is expressed in the imaginary idea of a primordial contract between prince and people, from which it follows that every new law modifying that contract must receive the consent of both parties. The monarch needs support from his subjects for his authority, his subjects need that his authority should be limited; "now the limitation and support of the royal authority can only meet in the division of legislation, in the mutual *veto* of the people and of the king, which forbids any innovation that would either give that authority an excessive extension or would weaken it dangerously." ¹

On the question of the two chambers, which afterwards became a kind of shibboleth, he observes, that whatever opinions may be held on the ultimate advisability of two chambers, there can be no question of forming them by separating the Orders in the States-General, for there the constitution must be discussed in common; "the form which might be thought fit to preserve the constitution would not be fit to establish it." This was Mounier's opinion too. Barnave seems almost to take it for granted that there will eventually be a second chamber, and shows Mounier's influence in his inclination to the forms of the British constitution; he even thinks that an improved form of hereditary chamber might be the safest, as it alone has stood the test of experience, though he hopes that something better may be found for France.² He points out that no comparison can be made between the French nobles and the British peers; the peers are not a large class, set apart like the nobles, and "not only do they enjoy no pecuniary exemptions, but it would be impossible for them to establish any, since they can neither propose the bill of subsidies nor propose modifications to it when it is sent to them by the Commons". "The principal danger to the constitution in England" lies in "the corruption of the House of Commons," due in great measure to the poverty and the small number of the electors, who are easily bought.

The necessity of an independent electorate was a root-principle with the members of the Constituent Assembly, and many of their measures which have been blamed as undemocratic

¹ Ibid. 5, 11, 12.

² Ibid., 18-23.

were dictated by their determination to guard against corruption and undue influence. Barnave thinks that France has one great advantage over England, making for purity of representation, in the number of her landholders.

"It is a great boon for liberty when property in land dominates in the spirit, in the customs, in the government of a people; for the result is that there is more energy and purity in men's souls and less inequality in their fortunes, that they have more physical means of resistance, and that those who have an interest in the constitution preponderate over those who imagine that they may find theirs in destroying it."¹ Agriculture is to him "the first of the arts"; in the ideal free state it will draw citizens of all classes to the land, and then, "with the happy disappearance of odious privileges, hope and emulation will penetrate rapidly among the down-trodden classes; active industry, by dividing up properties, will quickly bring that blessed time when happiness will no longer be an exclusive right, when the joys of liberty will be shared among all its defenders, when the insulting ostentation of the rich, shameful offspring of slavery and the inequality of fortunes, will give place to competency and comfort, the source of a common felicity."²

It is important to remember that though the Constituent Assembly never intended to give the vote to the poorest classes, most of its members honestly believed that, by a better distribution of property and chances, all who were worthy and industrious would have the possibility of obtaining it.

In a passage near the end Barnave certainly had his father in mind: "O all you generous Frenchmen, who kept in trust for our country her antique character and primitive virtues; men esteemed by all classes, venerated by all parties, irreproachable citizens, zealous patriots, tender fathers, faithful husbands, complete to-day the benefits you have bestowed upon us, teach us how to receive the blessings you have made us love!"³

With such hopes and ideals did he prepare to go to the States-General. Writing in after years of his state of mind when he left Grenoble, he says: "I was not elated above

¹ *Coup d'œil*, 20.

² *Ibid.*, 27.

³ *Ibid.*, 28.

reason. My political principles were, except for some slight shades of difference, what they are to-day, what they have never ceased to be—impassioned for liberty. I wished for it in forms capable of giving it a durable character; I desired, not that the most possible should be done, but the best. I thought, and I printed it, that French liberty could only exist under a monarchical government; I regarded the right of sanction as the characteristic attribute of the monarchy. I had learnt enough about political ideas to know that excess is always the ruin of liberty; I had received from nature a soul strong enough to believe that true courage has never existed without moderation, that puerile exaltation is one of the attributes of weakness. I abhorred falsehood. All those with whom I passed my life have seen by my acts and speeches that I believed elevation of character to consist above all in these two things, openness and moderation; and if, in the course of the Revolution, I have sometimes forgotten the last, I declare that then alone did I cease to be myself.”¹

He had considerable personal advantages to help him. “His face added a great deal to the effect he produced,” says Béranger, “although the features were irregular it was fine in expression and lighted up easily. He had fair hair, eyes blue and kind, a mouth large, but embellished by teeth of a dazzling whiteness; his figure was of the middle height and well made.” His exact height was five foot eight, as we learn from his passport, which calls his hair chestnut. We may add to Béranger’s description; a lofty forehead, thick, curly hair, a pale complexion, a nose with a slight tendency to turn up, a mouth which projected without having thick lips and shut very firmly, a serious air and a particularly attractive smile. He carried his head high, was slim and slight in build, neat in person and always well dressed.² What struck every one

¹ *Introduction*, 98–9.

² Béranger, cvii; *A. N. W.* 13. Cf. de Lévis, *Souvenirs et Portraits*, p. 220; “without being tall he was well-made; but his features were not regular; he had a long face and a large mouth.” The gibes of enemies tell much about his appearance, e. g. “M. Barnave, whose curls take the place of modesty and his impudence of wit”. (*Veni Creator Spiritus*, a famous pamphlet by Peltier). ‘Curls worthy of

most in him was a look of extreme youth. In spite of his thin, thoughtful face and marked features he appeared to be many years younger than he was, and was always spoken of as 'young Barnave', and by his enemies as 'little Barnave', and 'the child.'

There are several good portraits of him,¹ but his face was evidently hard to draw, and most of those one sees fail to reproduce its peculiarities or its refinement. The clumsy-featured or sneering effigies which often appear in books, and even on the walls of galleries, give an entirely wrong impression; some of them are even taken from another original.

His voice was pleasant, clear, and high-pitched. We know from Arthur Young that "none but stentorian lungs or the finest, clearest voices" could be heard at Versailles, and he was no stentor; he says himself that his vocal powers were not naturally of the strongest, and that he was obliged to take care of his voice, as he was apt to get hoarse in winter; yet he always made himself heard. His delivery was excellent, 'grace' and 'charm' are words which occur again and again in accounts of his speeches. "There was grace in his diction, in his attitude, in all his person. His speeches were those of a factionist, of a tribune, but of a tribune who lived in good society," says Thibaudeau, who heard him at Versailles in the early days.²

an Adonis and a vile sybarite." (*Dialogue de Pasquin et Morforio sur la Terrasse des Feuillans*, 15 pp., n. d. Anon., B. M. R. 203). "M. Barnave, with his well-known agreeable smile." (*Actes des Apôtres*, no. x.) Barnave, "smiling with that sardonic grin which wins him all hearts." (*L'Ami des Ministériels*, no. ii; quoted in *Patriote français*, 19 Sept. 1791, p. 343.) "Narcissus Barnave, well powdered, neat as a new pin, and dressed like a former Prince of the Blood". (Mirabeau Cadet in *Lanterne Magique Nationale*, no. iii, p. 4.)

¹ e. g. 1. A bust attributed to Houdon, in the Library at Grenoble. Posthumous portraits are sometimes drawn from it. 2. A profile by Guérin, engraved by Fiesinger, one of a series of deputies, 1790. 3. A full-length caricature, with two faces, 1791. 4. A profile by Legros, well reproduced in M. Lenotre's *Drame de Varennes*; other reproductions lose the expression.

² Linguet (*Annales politiques*, xviii, 293 note), in a virulent attack, talks of his "clear voice", and calls it "squalling". A. Young, 163; Barnave, *Œuvres*, iii. 319; A. C. Thibaudeau, *Biographie, Mémoires*,

The special character of his eloquence lay in its combination of inward ardour with outward calm. He spoke, not to move but to convince, and moved because of the strength of his own convictions. He was not a mighty orator like Mirabeau, and never attempted flights which were beyond his scope. But he was a debater of the first rank, and when we consider that Frenchmen were new to political debate and that he had absolutely no models in the style of oratory in which he excelled, his achievements may seem as amazing, in their way, as Mirabeau's. He spoke with perfect fluency—a rare gift in the beginning of the Revolution—was never put out, and did not know what nervousness was. His mind, keen and quick, seized at once upon essential points; he saw clearly and made his hearers see clearly too. His speeches were packed with argument; his language was always dignified and neither stilted nor flowery; his periods had a sonorous ring. He impressed all he said with his own personality.

His papers show that he prepared important speeches carefully. He used to put down (on any blank piece of paper which came to hand), his headings, with indications of what he meant to say on them; always in oratorical form, and correcting frequently as he went. The notes on particular points are sometimes full. For his earlier speeches he had his notes copied out, and corrected them again.

His oratory is often criticized as cold; he knew this and he knew too that if he chose to let himself go, he could stir feeling and rouse passion successfully, as he did on one or two occasions. But his extreme conscientiousness and an instinctive dislike of excess made him careful both of what he said and of how he said it. In some notes on his own early "conduct in the Assembly" he remarks: "With composure and self-possession, a natural and well-placed warmth

92. Cf. Vergniaud in his *Éloge funèbre d'Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau*, p. 19 (Bordeaux, Ap. 1791, 34 pp.). "There is in the National Assembly an orator who in extreme youth has all the maturity of reason; his countenance is gentle, he has the soul of Brutus. . . . Gifted with facile elocution, he has also the graces which render it persuasive." De Lévis (*Souvenirs*, 220), who says that his voice was "strong but not very sonorous and his pronunciation was not clear", and that he had "more dignity than grace", seems alone in his opinion on these points.

succeeds on great occasions, and I have forbidden it to myself too strictly at times when it would have contributed to my success. One ought not to cut down and impoverish one's speeches from timidity, and refuse oneself even profitable accessories. It is much better to speak seldomer, and each time that one speaks to show oneself striking and rich, except in matters where clearness and simplicity are the true beauties. One must interest and penetrate a large assembly as much as one can ; whatever only flows on, whatever does not bite is almost without effect. I use the biting more commonly in conversation than in the Assembly." ¹

Thus he criticized himself, but though his powers improved with every year he never altered his style, never spoke for effect ; and in spite of all that has been said he was remarkably free from vanity, while his only ambition was to make the best use of his powers in the service of his country.

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. 320.

CHAPTER V

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TOWARDS the close of April, groups of deputies travelling together began to arrive in Paris. Barnave reached it on the 21st, and went off to Versailles with Revol the next day to look for rooms. They took a lodging together at No. 5, rue de Noailles, close to the Hall of meeting, in a house which is still standing, and paid two hundred livres a month for it. "We shall be fairly comfortable," writes Barnave. Later, probably in August, he moved to No. 6 rue d'Artois, hard by, and Revol moved elsewhere.¹

The 27th came, but no opening, and in the evening notice was given that, as all the elected deputies had not arrived and the Paris elections were not over, the opening had been deferred till May 4th. At the same time the marquis de Brézé, Grand-Master of the Ceremonies, announced the correct costumes for the Three Orders. The Clergy were to appear in their robes of ceremony; the Nobles in black and cloth of gold, with lace cravats and white-plumed hats; the Tiers-état in black with curious, short mantles, tricorn hats, and white batiste cravats, the hair curled and powdered in front and hanging down loose behind, as lawyers wore it in court. This was the kind of dress worn by Orgon in the *Tartuffe*, partly legal, partly theatrical,² and the Tiers-état resented the stupid slight. It proved to be the first of a long series.

¹ Barnave to his mother. *A. N. W.* 13. This draft of a letter is dated Paris, 23 Jan., an obvious mistake for April. *Liste par ordre alphabétique de Baillages et Sénéchaussées de MM. les Députés aux États généraux.* Paris, 1789. (*B. M. F. R.* 45). M. Brette, *Recueil de Documents*, ii, prints a later list of addresses. The Archbishop of Vienne, who became Minister on 3 Aug., and moved to the Palace, had lodged at no. 6 rue d'Artois, now rue St. Martin. This house has been pulled down; that in the rue de Noailles is now no. 12.

² La Revellière-Lépeaux, *Mémoires*, i. 71; *Récit des Séances des Députés des Communes*, reprinted by the Société de l'Histoire de la Révolution française, Paris, 1895, 1-2.

The time of waiting was useful, for it enabled the Commons to become acquainted, and like drew at once to like. The eager, hot-headed Bretons, fresh from a struggle of their own, hired a room for their large deputation to gather in and held their first meeting on April 30th. Congenial deputies from other provinces attended it, amongst them Mounier, and we may be sure that Barnave and other Dauphinois were there. It was agreed to have further conferences about the action which should be taken with regard to the vote 'by head',¹ and thus began the 'Club Breton', the origin of the Jacobins, of which Barnave early became a member. The leading spirits were three distinguished advocates of Rennes; Glezen, prominent in the van and soon tired; Lanjuinais, a professor of law, intrepid, immovably conscientious, and narrow; Le Chapelier, a man of thirty-five, whose spectacled face, with pursy lips and pendulous nose, gave little promise of the force and intellect he possessed. Eloquent, lucid, courageous and patriotic, he became a leader at once, and was one of the best orators of the National Assembly. As an advocate he was so scrupulous that he is said to have refused any clients whose cause he did not believe to be just,² but he was a gambler and he had blemished his private life by dissipation.

On May 2nd all the deputies who had arrived were formally presented to the King. The Orders went separately, and Clergy and Nobles were both received without delay, but when the Commons met in the Salle d'Hercule, at four o'clock, they were kept waiting for three hours, until the Master of the Ceremonies, who had lost his papers, was ready. At length they were marched in single file, 'like a flock of sheep driven by dogs', along a gangway railed off by a balustrade, through state apartments and great gallery, crowded with ladies who eyed them disdainfully, through the Salle du Conseil, and so, unannounced, into the King's state bedroom. Here Louis stood, with his brothers and the dignitaries of his Court round him, and here each deputy, as he passed, made his bow to the monarch, who took little or no notice of it and spoke only to

¹ Letier of Boullé, deputy; *Revue de la Révolution*, d'Héricault and Bord, x, *Documents inédits*, p. 163 (Paris, 1887). M. Aulard cites this, Jacobins, vi.

² *Nouvelle Biographie générale* (1859).

one of them, Michel Gérard, the Breton farmer, whose brown waistcoat and clumping shoes attracted his benevolent notice. The unwelcomed deputies went out again through the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, with the first chill on their loyalty from their first contact with the King.¹

Tuesday, May 5th, had been finally fixed on for the opening of the States-General, and it was expected that in the course of the ceremony the Government would announce a decision on the two great questions which were still in suspense. The Commons were determined that the Orders should sit together and vote by head. The majority of the Nobles, and the higher Clergy, who intended to take their fair share of taxation but meant to keep their other privileges, were equally determined that the forms of the last States-General of 1614, when the Orders sat and voted separately, should be followed. As to the Court and the ministry, they were divided into two parties ; one, with the Queen and the Princes for its mainstay, was blindly and entirely on the side of the Nobles ; the other, led by Necker, inclined to the side of the Commons. Since Necker's party had the ascendancy and the King was under Necker's influence, it seemed probable that the Government would decide as the Commons wished.² But Necker, who had other views, misjudged the situation. He thought, and he made the King believe, that the Commons would be easily manageable, out of gratitude. The lesson given by Dauphiné had been lost upon him.

We will pass over the often described May 4th, that beautiful spring day of sunshine and hope and happiness, when the States-General escorted the Holy Sacrament in solemn procession across Versailles, from Notre-Dame to St. Louis. All we will note is that the Tiers-état horrified de Brézé, who wished to arrange them ceremonially, by insisting on walking without regard to precedence.³

The ' *Salle des Menus Plaisirs* ', destined to receive the

¹ *Récit des Séances*, 3 ; Gaultier-Biauzat, *Vie et Correspondance*, ii. 21-2 ; *Point du Jour*, 27 avril 1789-17 juin (pub. 1790), 2 ; letter of Fournier de la Pommeraye, deputy, *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de la Révolution française*, d'Héricault and Bord, série i, p. 119. (Paris, 1884).

² Barnave, *Introduction*, 92.

³ Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 27.

States-General, was part of a block of buildings used to store the paraphernalia of Court amusements. These buildings were situated on the base of a triangle of land lying between the avenue de Paris, the rue des Chantiers and the rue St. Martin (now rue de l'Assemblée Nationale). Some of them, on either side of a large court opening on the avenue de Paris, were solid, and parts of these are standing still, as barracks. But the great Hall behind them, built between 1783 and 1787, as a gigantic store-house or lumber-room, was not substantial. It had been elaborately decorated and used for the Assembly of the Notables, and now, enlarged and fitted up anew, it was a magnificent though temporary structure.¹ Along each side of the Hall, in front of wide galleries for spectators, stood a row of fluted Ionic columns. The columns were continued across one end, the other was occupied by a dais and baldacchino, hung with purple velvet sprinkled with golden *fleurs de lis*. Here the King and his Court sat. On his right, on one side of the room, were eight rows of padded benches for the three hundred clergy ; on his left eight similar rows for the three hundred nobles ; and opposite him many rows for the six hundred of the Tiers-état. All were benches without backs, for etiquette forbade the use of seats with backs in the King's presence. Abundant light, pleasantly tempered by white silk curtains, came through one large and two small oval-shaped openings in the roof, and the floor was spread with Savonnerie carpets.²

At nine o'clock on the morning of the 5th, the deputies of all three Orders met in a wooden gallery which led to the Hall from the side entrance in the rue des Chantiers. From this gallery each deputation was summoned in turn, by slow degrees, and the Orders were shown to their places by de Brézé and two underlings. The ceremony was watched by a multitude of spectators who filled the galleries ; they greeted the duc d'Orléans with applause, clapped the Dauphiné deputation heartily, and received Mirabeau with a murmur.³

¹ A. Brette, *Histoire des édifices*, &c., pp. 12, 19, 23, &c.

² *Correspondance littéraire, etc., de Grimm et de Diderot*, xiv. 338-9. (Paris, 1829-31) ; Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 29.

³ Grimm and Diderot, 339-40.

At about 12.30 the King entered and, amid cheers and enthusiasm, opened the States-General in a short, benevolent speech, chiefly about the dilapidation of the finances. He announced that the keeper of the Seals would declare his intentions. Barentin, keeper of the Seals, next read a speech, heard only by those close to him, in which he said that the vote by head seemed to be the best method; that the King was leaving the decision of this matter to the States-General themselves, and that he commanded them to meet next day to verify their credentials.

Then came the popular idol, Necker, whose two and a half hours' speech, read partly by himself and partly by a secretary, was perfectly audible. The faces of the Commons darkened as they listened. It was a kind of lecture on the finances, on the King's goodness in summoning the States-General, on the gratitude they owed him. Not a word of the constitution. Necker advised the Orders to meet separately at first; the Tiers-état, he said, must let the Clergy and Nobles have the merit of the pecuniary sacrifices they were about to make. Later on, perhaps, the Orders might discuss some matters together; but where there was danger of innovation, questions were better debated apart. The King and Barentin had left the great questions hanging in the scales; Necker tipped the balance heavily on the side of the privileged Orders.

At 4.30 the ceremony was over and the Assembly could stream out into the sunny afternoon. Hope still filled all hearts in spite of Necker's damping speech, but the Commons knew that a struggle was before them.¹

They repaired next morning, as bidden, to the great Hall, which was to be their meeting-place. The Clergy and Nobles were sitting separately in two smaller, neighbouring halls, and the problem was, how to bring them back to the great Hall, how to unite the three divided Orders. The first proceeding of any elected body was the verification of the members' credentials, and the Commons had made up their minds that the first step towards inducing the Orders to sit together was to make them verify their credentials together. In

¹ *Moniteur*, i. 1, &c.; *Récit des Séances*, 5, &c.; Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 29, &c.

insisting on this they took their stand upon a principle on which much stress had been laid in Dauphiné; namely, that the members of the States-General represented, not three Orders, but the nation. Each portion, therefore, of the representatives of the nation had the right to satisfy itself that the other representatives were duly elected.¹

The position was by no means hopeless, for it was known that many of the curés, who formed the larger part of the clerical chamber, were in favour of the vote by head, and so were a minority of the nobles; while liberal nobles, like Lafayette, and the deputies of Dauphiné in both chambers could be counted upon to do their best.

Meanwhile it was clear to each deputy that until the other Orders had agreed to a verification in common, the Tiers-état must be careful to do nothing which would give any pretext to the enemy for saying that they had constituted themselves as a separate chamber, and had thereby acknowledged the division of the Orders.

On the first day nothing had been made ready, and when the Commons arrived the Hall was being swept and the dais cleared away. Nearly six hundred men, most of whom were unknown to each other, and had hardly any previous political experience, without organization, without constituted authorities,² were turned into a vast hall, bad for sound, with backless benches in rows round the walls, and no platform to speak from; while the circumstances in which they were placed were such that a single false step would have brought ruin on their cause.

It is probably true that so many men of distinguished talent have never met together in one parliament as were gathered here. But talents in brilliant clusters are notorious for neutralizing each other, and the amazing thing about this assembly is the admirable good sense, the *esprit de corps*, the self-abnegation, the willingness to be led, which marked it from the first. In less than two months the Commons had

¹ See their arguments in *Procès-verbal des Conférences sur la vérification des pouvoirs*.

² Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 31; Mirabeau, *Lettres à ses Commettans*, no. 2, p. 14.

forced the two other Orders to join them, and the King to sanction the union, and had prepared the way for the making of the constitution.

Is it a wonder that most of the first day was spent in noise and confusion, everyone talking and no one listening? Yet by midday a *doyen* had been appointed to preside, in the person of the oldest deputy, Leroux, a worthy but incompetent man; and six of the elder members had been selected to help him. In the afternoon there was even a kind of debate, the speakers standing in their places and shouting till they obtained silence. Later on they took to standing on a seat near the *doyen*, from which vantage ground it was a little easier for them to make themselves heard.¹

Before speaking of what the Commons did, we will glance at their prominent members. There was Mirabeau, unquestionably the best orator among them, who spoke often and was always heard with admiration. But the scandals of his past life caused his colleagues to distrust him, and distrust was deepened by the fluctuations of his conduct and principles. He went about with a little following of clever and conceited Genevese, who out of love for him, mixed with the cosmopolitan's desire to meddle in the affairs of other nations, got up his subjects for him and sometimes wrote his speeches.

There was Mounier, speaking in energetic sentences, "precise as a professor of mathematics."² There was another good speaker, Malouet, late Marine Intendant, who represented ministerial views; a handsome, dignified man, a capable administrator and personal friend of Necker's. He had all the fastidious dislike of the intellectual for popular government, and had nearly resigned his membership when he heard the "small bourgeois, practitioners, and advocates" of his province talking about tyranny and constitutions.³ He irritated his colleagues sorely, for he took no pains to conceal the profound contempt he felt for their inexperience; but he was too honest not to acknowledge the greatness of the body he had joined, and as he was an excellent man, indomitable, disinterested,

¹ Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 32, &c., 39; *Récit des Séances*, 6.

² Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 33.

³ Malouet, *Mémoires*, i. 245.

really anxious for reform, and loyal to the decisions of the Assembly, he won respect. From the first days to the last he lectured and criticized in frequent and lengthy speeches, often very galling in tone, which are in themselves a refutation of his constant assertion that the minority was terrorized, and a proof of the Assembly's respect for free speech.

There was Rabaut de Saint-Étienne, the Protestant pastor from Nîmes, a steady, able man, frank and open in look and speech, but with an uninteresting expression. There were two renowned advocates: the windy Bergasse, of Lyon, member of the Paris Bar, who had got the better of Beaumarchais; and the academician Target, a weighty speaker, somewhat prolix and pleonastic, whose oratory smacked too much of the law courts. A phrase of his, "Peace and concord, followed by calm and tranquillity", caused endless amusement. There was Volney, the author, still young; and Dupont de Nemours, the economist, of whom his friend Turgot had truly prophesied that he would always remain "a young man of brilliant promise."¹ There was Le Chapelier; and there was Thouret, the glory of the Rouen Bar and the Rouen Provincial Assembly, a man of forty-three, in whom a certain natural caution, bordering on timidity, was overruled by the principles in the light of which he walked. His keen face was an index of his fine mind, and he brought with him learning, quiet eloquence, and a unique power of expounding involved and complicated subjects methodically, clearly, and in an interesting manner. "If the Revolution had let him and Barnave live, we should have had two perfect models of parliamentary debaters," says Lacretelle,² who had heard all the orators of the Revolution.

To these men, whose names were known through France, must be added Barnave, unknown till then outside his own country; for he made his mark at once. He must have spoken the first day, for who else could that orator who "seemed quite young" have been, who impressed the deputy, Biauzat, "singularly", and was prettily complimented by the man who

¹ For Rabaut, see Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 67; A. Young, 174; for Dupont, *Biographie Michaud*. Target took his seat on the 18th.

² *Histoire de France*, vii. 305.

answered him? ¹ He says of himself: "As a friend of Mounier, and noticed from the first sittings of the Commons for some facility in expressing myself, I was soon more or less in touch with all the men who bade fair to be important on the popular side. My personal position in these first days was unlike that of anyone else; I was too young to conceive the idea of directing so imposing an assembly, and this circumstance gave a sense of security to all those who had pretensions to become leaders. No one saw a rival in me, and each might see a pupil or a useful follower, for already I was beginning to exercise an ascendancy in the Assembly, which I owed above all to the frankness and kindliness ² of my speeches. I was therefore well received by most of the leaders. I used the sort of influence over them which they seemed to allow me, in trying to unite them. Thus, I made vain efforts to bring Mounier and the abbé Siéyes together; an enterprise worthy indeed of a young man, in the case of these imperious men, who had come to enforce opposing systems." ³

How were the Commons to bring the Nobles and Clergy into line, and in the meanwhile, how were they to organize themselves effectively but provisionally? These were the two questions which they had to answer. Any decisive step they took, any concessions they made, might be regarded as an abandonment of their position; some members, therefore,

¹ Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 33; cf. Mirabeau, *Lettres à ses Commettans*, no. ii, 15, 21.

² "Bonté"; he uses the word with a particular intention.

³ *Introduction*, 100-1. There is an interesting fragment, obviously about this circumstance, among his papers. (*A. N. W.* 12). "These drawbacks, which I might well have expected, do not hinder me from reaping very great personal advantages. 1. Intimate relations with the first personages of the kingdom—and it is to be remarked that my standing with these persons is very superior to my standing in the Assembly, for I have over several of them an ascendancy which no one else has, and which depends a good deal on the reason that my indifference to putting myself forward [excludes (?), the word is illegible] all idea of rivalry. 2. A reputation for disinterestedness, which several others deserve but no one else has to the same degree." The odd use of the words 'first personages', might lead those who are unacquainted with the circumstances into thinking that the King, Queen, and ministers were meant.

were in favour of doing, as nearly as possible, nothing at all. On the other hand, inaction, when the welfare of the country depended on what they did, would alienate the sympathy of the nation, from which they derived their strength. To be conciliatory as long as there was hope of conciliation, to carry the nation with them by giving as much publicity as possible to their doings, to organize the Assembly up to the very point beyond which it would become a constituted chamber, seemed to be the best policy.

These were Mounier's views, and they were supported by Barnave, who made his first certainly recorded speech on May 12th, in favour of Mounier's motion that a *bureau* of fourteen members should be elected each week, to help the *doyen* keep order and to count the votes. Barnave was complimented by Mirabeau in his *Lettre à ses Commettans*. "It is impossible to speak better, with more reason, energy, and grace than M. Barnave did on this occasion; a young Dauphinois, the co-deputy of M. Mounier, who gives promise of great talents and particularly those of an orator."¹

The motion passed and proceedings became rather more orderly, but the method of debating, adopted to secure perfect impartiality, was lengthy and cumbersome. In each debate the Assembly was called over twice; the first time all who chose might speak; the second time each member was supposed to vote, yes or no; but in reality all gave a reason for their vote, and many tried to speak again. It was not till May 30th that a speedier method was adopted. The calling-over was abandoned, and the vote was taken *par assis et par levée*, which meant that first all who were in favour of a motion stood up, and then all who were against it. If the result seemed doubtful to the officials, recourse was had to the *appel nominal*, or roll-call of the members.

Mirabeau and his Genevese wished the deputies to follow the rules of the British House of Commons, which Mr. Romilly (afterwards Sir Samuel) had drawn up for their use.² If they had done this they would have saved time and prevented disorder. But with true wisdom they refused to imitate the English,

¹ *Lettres à ses Commettans*, iii. 6; *Récit des Séances*, 13.

² Romilly, *Memoirs*, i. 101-3, 354-5.

preferring to hew out a way for themselves. This proper national pride was considered a proof of boundless conceit by patronizing English and cosmopolitan Genevese.

In order to keep the Commons well under the public eye and to check the unfavourable reports of their inaction that were beginning to spread, a few members were desirous of starting a kind of official journal. On May 20th young Laborde de Mereville, son of the great banker, who had thrown up a big post in the Treasury and cast in his lot with the Tiers-état, proposed the appointment of a committee of twenty-four, to draw up anything the Assembly might wish to publish and to circulate it in the provinces. Barnave and Target were two of the most zealous promoters of this motion, which had been concerted beforehand among the advanced party, and was supported, strange to say, by Malouet. But the Assembly thought it dangerous, and rejected it by 475 to 37.

When the vote was taken Barnave, in a youthful ebullition, went too far, and excited the murmurs of the Assembly. According to Biauzat, when his turn came he said: "I abhor aristocracy, and I vote for the motion, *which is not understood*." "This young man, full of talent, seemed to be too presumptuous here," says Biauzat, "and somewhat diminished the consideration in which he is held."¹ One cannot see what 'aristocracy' had to do with the matter, and as another version leaves it out, it may be Biauzat's invention. If Barnave said it, it is the only instance in which he spoke off the point.

In following the dealings of the Commons with the other Orders it is well to remember that, with all their respect for tradition, many of them must, from the first, have had in their minds the conviction that if the other Orders obstinately refused to join them, they, being the majority, must take matters into their own hands, constitute themselves the general Assembly and begin the business of the nation.²

They started with one great advantage. Owing to a tactical

¹ Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 77-8; cf. *Journal de Duquesnoy*, i. 41.

² Barnave writes to his mother, on 16 May; "The Tiers-état is temporising, and wishes, by patience and by trying what invitations and conciliation will do, to bring in the Clergy if possible, and to convict the Nobles of bad faith, before going further." Draft of letter A. N. W. 12. 23.

mistake of the Government the great Hall, the natural meeting-place of the whole States-General, had been assigned to them ; and further, its galleries held a large number of the public, who flocked thither daily and followed the debates with keen and often noisy interest. The Commons encouraged their attendance, and attempts to exclude them, made by Malouet and others, were indignantly silenced. The Clergy and Nobles in their smaller halls kept their sittings jealously private.¹

On the very first day the question whether a deputation should be sent to the Clergy and Nobles, inviting them to come and verify their credentials in common, was discussed ; but the feeling of the Assembly was in favour of doing nothing. On the morrow, when it became known that the Nobles had decided absolutely on separate verification, and that the Clergy had decided on it provisionally and by a very small majority, Mounier carried a motion for an informal and voluntary deputation to the other Orders, to inform them that the members of the Commons were waiting for their arrival to begin the verification. This informal deputation was well received, and led to a proposal from the Clergy that the three Orders should each appoint commissaries to discuss the invitation of the Tiers-état together. The Nobles accepted the proposal, the Commons debated it for four days. Rabaut de Saint-Étienne proposed to name commissaries ; Le Chapelier, who headed the party that wished to proceed to extremities at once, moved that the deputies of the Church and the Nobles should be summoned forthwith to come to the Hall of the Estates, in order to form the States-General and to verify credentials together, as became the representatives of the nation. Barnave was on the side of conciliation and his speech was much admired. He spoke, as always, extempore ; most of the speakers read their discourses.²

He explained the situation to his mother the day after his speech, which he does not mention. " You see that even if there were nothing to hope from these conferences, it would always be of great importance that we could not be reproached

¹ Duquesnoy, i. 62-3 (*inter alios*). Malouet (i. 261) says that Necker, in despair, thought of making the floor of the great Hall give way.

² Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 58. Le Hodey, i. 31.

with having refused them ; and that we should be able to prove, by publishing all that is said in them, that we only resorted to extreme measures when we had exhausted all the resources of persuasion.”¹

Rabaut's motion was finally carried, with amendments, the conferences being confined to the question of verification. Both Malouet and Mirabeau refused to vote.²

On the 19th sixteen commissaries were elected ; the men who most commanded the confidence of the Assembly. They were : Rabaut, Target, Le Chapelier, Mounier, Dupont de Nemours, d'Ailly, Thouret, Legrand, Milscent, Salomon, Volney, Redon, Viguier, Garat l'ainé, Bergasse ; and at the end of the list, in spite of his youth, Barnave. Only six spoke at the conferences and Barnave was one ; his forcible explanation of the reasons for verification in common is perhaps the best thing in the report of the proceedings.³ Target, who drew up the *procès-verbal*, was the chief speaker.

Two conferences, conducted with all courtesy and moderation, took place (May 23rd and 25th). The Clergy, who assumed the rôle of conciliators, remained neutral ; the Nobles, though out-argued, would not give in, and as they were already bound to separate verification by the vote of their chamber, it was evident that further meetings would be useless.

There being now no hope of winning over the Nobles, the Commons turned to the Clergy. On May 27th, on Mirabeau's motion, a solemn deputation was sent to them, bearing a message which Target had drawn up. It invited them, “in the name of the God of Peace, and of the national interest,” to join the Commons in the Hall of the General Assembly, in order to consult on the means of procuring the concord which was so necessary for the general welfare.

The Clergy, who professed a desire for concord, were staggered, perceiving that a refusal would put them grievously

¹ Letter of 16 May, quoted above.

² *Récit des Séances*, 19-24 ; Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 67.

³ *Récit des Séances*, 25 ; *Procès-verbal des Conférences sur la Vérification des Pouvoirs*, 206-7. The *Procès-verbal* does not give the speakers' names ; the *Point du Jour* (27 avril-17 juin), which reprints it, supplies them.

in the wrong. Deputations went to and fro. The first reply of the Clergy was 'that they would consider'; later on they asked for time, and the Commons answered that they would sit waiting till two in the morning. The curés in the clerical chamber wished to settle the matter at once, and the invitation would certainly have been accepted had not the higher clergy succeeded in adjourning the debate. Some of the Bishops met in conclave that night and, so it was believed, sent privately to the King to ask him to help them out of the difficulty.¹

The result was seen next morning when a royal letter, communicated to the Commons in an insulting manner, invited the three Orders to resume the abandoned conferences, in the presence of certain dignitaries. The Clergy accepted the invitation at once; the Nobles did so after passing a resolution that the division of the Orders and their mutual veto were constitutional; the Commons debated the question at leisure. Opinions were divided. Barnave, convinced from personal observation that the conferences would lead to nothing, and that conciliation was now hopeless, was one of those who spoke against their resumption.² But the advice of Mirabeau and Rabaut prevailed, chiefly because it was thought impolitic to refuse the King's request, and it was decided that the conferences should be resumed, that a *procès-verbal* signed by all the commissaries should be demanded, and that a deputation should be sent to the King to express the attachment and gratitude of his faithful Commons.

Five more conferences were accordingly held, in the presence of Necker and of other commissioners appointed by the King. At the third, a 'Plan of Conciliation' drawn up by Necker was brought forward. The Orders, he said, ought not to verify credentials apart, but neither ought the Tiers-état to have the preponderance, as would be the case if they verified them together. Let each Order, therefore, verify them separately, communicate the verifications to the others for a rapid survey, and submit the few dubious elections to commissaries of the three Orders, whose judgement must be ratified by their

¹ Bailly, *Mémoires*, i. 78-80, 230; Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 91; *Récit des Séances*, 38, &c.

² *Point du Jour* (27 avril-17 juin), 176-7.

respective chambers. If the chambers differed about an election, let the King decide.¹

This Plan, obviously intended to break the power of the Commons, was submitted by the commissaries to the three assemblies. The Commons resolved not to discuss it till the conferences were over, their reason being that their commissaries had only agreed to hear the Plan on condition that they might afterwards complete the statement of their case. The statement was not yet completed, and it was possible that their arguments might cause the Plan to be modified in their favour. Had the two other Orders accepted the Plan, the Commons would have been in a difficult position ; fortunately for them, though the Clergy accepted, the Nobles only did so with a reservation. The Nobles had one point of agreement with the Commons : they did not intend the King to have anything to say to their elections, and though they consented to the Plan where the election of a whole deputation was in question, they resolved that, where Nobles only were concerned, the last word must lie with their own chamber.

The conferences dragged on ; they could not be wound up till the *procès-verbal* was signed, and the Nobles made endless difficulties. Throughout the conferences they had objected to the use of the word " Commons ", and whenever the Commons had used it, had replied by calling them the Tiers-état ; they now refused to sign the *procès-verbal*, even under protest, if it contained the obnoxious word. They were finally persuaded to let a secretary sign it for them, under protest, and the Clergy, who had also made difficulties, having unexpectedly yielded, the signatures were affixed, and the conferences closed on June 9th.²

Meanwhile the Commons had received an important addition ; the Paris deputation, at last elected, had taken their seats on May 25th. Among its members, and first on the list, was the grave, hatchet-faced Bailly, savant and astronomer, who belonged to four academies. Camus was there too, the

¹ *Procès-verbal des Conférences*, 157, &c.

² *Ibid.* ; *Récit des Séances*. Among Barnave's papers are fragments of the notes he took at the second conference, and of other notes in several hands, of which his is one.

learned ' Advocate of the Clergy ', well-featured but with a fiery red complexion, an excellent speaker, able, honest, and inflexible. He was a stern Jansenist, who spent hours in prayer before his crucifix and hated Papal domination. Round-faced Dêmeunier, man of letters and royal censor, clever and clear-headed, was there ; Guillotin, the enlightened physician, who took the health of the Assembly under his charge ; two eminent advocates, Tronchet and Treilhard ; and, last elected, the renowned abbé Siéyes, whose pamphlet *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-état ?*, combined with his real ability and his air of mystery, had gained him as thinker and man of genius a reputation which lasted him through life, though after 1789 he did little or nothing more to justify it.

Bailly was chosen *doyen* on June 3rd, in succession to three worthy incapables, and things began to move with dignity and efficiency ; for this elderly savant, who had never taken part in public business before the Paris elections, and had no authority but what the good-will of his fellow deputies allowed him, made an ideal President, and by his wisdom, courage, and good humour guided the Assembly safely along its dangerous path.

His first task was to insist that the Commons' deputation should be received by the King. Deputations from the other Orders had been received without difficulty, but when the *doyen* of the Commons applied to the keeper of the Seals, as etiquette required, he was told : now that the King had gone out and could not be spoken to ; and now that nothing could be done because the Dauphin was ill. The Commons passed a resolution which stated that they recognized no intermediary between themselves and the King,¹ and after the poor little Dauphin, who had been dying for months, had passed away, Bailly applied again. He was now told that the ceremonial was the difficulty ; the King would not insist upon the Tiers-état approaching him on their knees ; but still, if the King wished it, —— ? Bailly refused to consider the

¹ Bailly, i. 90, &c. ; *Récit des Séances*, 51, 59, 62. Barnave moved an amendment : that some members should be sent to the King at once, to ask when he would receive the deputation ; it was not passed. (Le Hodey, i. 11 ; *Point du Jour*, 27 avril-17 juin, 230.)

question.¹ On June 6th the deputation was received, but not before another slight had been inflicted. The Assembly had deputed the 'Conciliatory Commissaries' and the Bureau; word came that the King would only admit twenty, and lots had to be drawn.

On the same day the Clergy made a clever move. They proposed to the other Orders to join with them in naming commissaries to discuss the dearness of corn and the best way of succouring poverty. Here was a dilemma! If the Commons agreed, they recognized the division of the Orders; if they refused, they would appear heartless to the poor. Populus and Robespierre, hitherto unknown, denounced the cunning and selfishness of the rich clergy, who might well succour the poor themselves, if they chose; and the Assembly got out of the difficulty by 'conjuring' the Clergy to "reunite with us at once in the common Hall," to consider what could be done to alleviate the general distress.²

On June 10th the Commons had come to the parting of the ways. The conferences were over, and the refusal of the Nobles to accept Necker's Plan had made further discussion of it needless. Nothing more could be attempted in the way of conciliation; it was time, as Mirabeau said, to do something decisive. The Commons could count on the support of the nation, and if the other Orders refused to join them they were determined to act alone. Therefore Siéyes, generally regarded as the member who carried most authority, made his celebrated motion: that a last invitation should be sent to the Clergy and Nobles to come and verify credentials in common, with the intimation that the roll-call of the constituencies was going to begin in an hour. The time was afterwards extended to 'this day'. After a long and complicated debate the motion was carried in the evening. An address to the King, explaining to him the reasons of the step they were taking, was also voted, and Siéyes and the 'Conciliatory Commissaries' were charged to draw it up;³ the task fell to Barnave.

On the 11th, the Fête-Dieu, there was no sitting, but on the morning of the 12th deputations were sent to the other Orders with the 'last invitation', to which Clergy and Nobles replied

¹ Bailly, i. 104. ² Ibid., i. 112-17. ³ *Récit des Séances*, 145-162.

as usual 'that they would consider.' The Commons sat waiting for the result, and whilst they waited Barnave read his address to the King. It was loyal and respectful enough, but Malouet, who did not think so, wanted some compliments added. His proposal was rejected, after a vigorous little speech by Barnave on the flattery bred by the air of courts, and the address was finally adopted, when it had been altered by the commissaries in compliance with criticism, and read a second time by Bergasse.¹ The alterations it underwent were so considerable that nothing characteristic was left, and though it is the best summary of the foregoing events that we have, it is somewhat dull and lifeless.

At about five o'clock the Nobles sent a message that they intended to consider the matter again to-morrow. Nothing was heard from the Clergy, and the Commons thinking they had waited long enough began to act. Bailly was appointed provisional president, Camus and Pison du Galland provisional secretaries, and at seven o'clock the roll-call began. As each constituency was named, in alphabetical order, its representatives were called upon to present their credentials; first the Clergy, then the Nobles, neither of whom responded, and last the Commons, who came up together and laid their credentials on the bureau. Hennebont was the last constituency reached that evening. Next morning, when the turn of Poitiers came, three bold curés, Lecesve, Ballard, and Jallet, came forward with their credentials, and were received with transports of joy. Six more curés ventured to join on the 14th. The roll-call over, the Assembly formed itself into bureaux, to examine and report upon the credentials.²

On June 15th the next step, discussed and approved beforehand in the Club Breton,³ was taken and the first great debate was held. It was known to the public that the Assembly was going to constitute itself, and the galleries were crowded with eager listeners, "all impatience to hear the eloquent

¹ *Point du Jour* (27 avril-17 juin), 349; Duquesnoy, i. 89; Le Hodey, i. 66. The address is printed, *Moniteur*, i. 66. Among Barnave's papers are drafts of portions, corrected by other hands.

² *Récit des Séances* and *Procès-verbal des Séances des Députés des Communes*.

³ Mounier, *Exposé*, pt. i. 5.

persons who had put down their names to speak," says an eyewitness, in a lively, contemporary account.¹ At length, after a deal of tiresome preliminary business, Siéyes rose, amid profound silence. In a speech of twenty minutes, 'full of admirable logic', he proposed that the Assembly should constitute itself under the name of "Assembly of the recognized and verified representatives of the French nation." Buzot, who followed, proposed another long title, and then there was a stir, for Mirabeau got up. Expectation was not disappointed, and the great orator, who spoke from a few notes, gave a fine display of his talents. He drew a vivid picture of the poverty and misery of the nation, and of the dangers of the situation. He warned his colleagues that if they went too far a dissolution might be the consequence, and proposed that the Assembly, keeping to what was both legal and strictly true, to what the King could not refuse to sanction, should take a title which no one could contest and call itself "Representatives of the French People."²

The speech made a sensation, but the conclusion did not please. What game was Mirabeau playing, that he should insidiously invite the Assembly to acknowledge that it represented, not the nation, but the People—an ambiguous term? The wordy and fluent Pétion refuted him with "the soundest logic." Then came Mounier, who rambled a good deal, and proposed the title of "Legitimate Assembly of the representatives of the greater part of the nation, acting in the absence of the smaller part," and Rabaut, who spoke extempore and spoke well, but rambled too, and proposed an even longer title. Then three dull speakers, Biauza, Tronchet, and an unnamed third who divagated to the importation of corn. "At last young Barnave rose, and ended the morning sitting by a refutation of M. Mirabeau's speech, as virile as it was eloquent."

He began with a stinging attack, evidently provoked by Mirabeau's bad faith: "I am not in the habit of founding my

¹ *Séance du Lundi, 15 juin 1789. Commencée à 9 heures du matin et finie à 10 heures du soir.* (24 pp., n. p., n. d.) (B. M. F. R. 45.) Arthur Young (163-6) has an account of this debate.

² *Séance du Lundi, 5-11*; Mirabeau, *Lettres à ses Commettans*, xi. 7, &c.

opinions on variable principles, on passions, on rumours often false. Neither do I regret that I am not gifted with the eloquence, which moving now to terror and now to indignation, is fitted to lead hearers astray in an empty waste of conjectures.”¹ Then, going straight to the point, he defined the word ‘People’; a word susceptible of two meanings, a word which might alienate the Clergy and the Nobles. He defended Mounier’s motion, trying to show that it was reconcilable with that of Siéyes, and concluded with this daring pronouncement: “We have nothing to fear from the authorities; they will have no reason for dissolving us, seeing that they were unable to avoid calling us together. The royal sanction is needed for permanent laws and not for objects which concern our own organization.”²

In the evening Mirabeau answered all his critics, amongst whom were Le Chapelier and Thouret, and paid special attention to Barnave’s damaging attack. Referring to him as “a previous speaker, whose youth may well add to my esteem for his talents, but is not a reason why he should prescribe to me,” he tried to refute him, representing him as having said: “When the People has spoken, the King’s sanction is not necessary,” and crying that, for his own part, if the King had no veto, he would rather live in Constantinople. But in spite of a magnificent harangue on the word ‘People’, in spite of another great speech next day, he could not efface the impression of treachery which he had made. He did his best, by rolling his two last speeches into one in his newspaper, thereby glossing over the evidence of how hard he had been pressed.³

“The abbé Siéyes’s motion will pass, and without restriction,” wrote Biauzat; and, in probable allusion to the activities of the Club Breton: “The Bretons, the Dauphinois, the Angevins and their adherents, who have been caballing about everything for nearly a month, are propping this system.”⁴

¹ The *Mercur de France*, 27 June 1789, p. 172, reports the opening of Barnave’s speech in nearly the same words.

² *Séance du Lundi*, 11–17; Mirabeau, *Lettres à ses Commettans*, xi. 32.

³ *Lettres à ses Commettans*, xi. 37, 39; *Séance du Lundi*, 22.

⁴ Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 118.

There was, however, a strenuous resistance to the motion ; many men thought the step too full of risk, Thouret as well as Malouet was against it, and on the evening of the 16th the position was critical. The Government was known to be hostile, rumours of dissolution and exile were in the air, and there was a strong feeling in the Assembly that it must constitute itself quickly lest it should be too late. Siéyes had abandoned his original clumsy title for the familiar name of " National Assembly ",¹ suggested by Legrand, and it had been decided to put the various motions before the House to the vote by *appel nominal*. The Assembly was incomplete, for the hour was advanced and many of the less zealous members had withdrawn ; nevertheless Bailly, as in duty bound, ordered the roll-call to begin. At this such a storm of cries arose as effectually stopped it. Bailly was sitting at a large table placed across the breadth of the room, and fortunately, he says, the opposing sides, who might otherwise have come to blows, were separated by this table. In front of him were three to four hundred deputies eager to vote, the fiery Bretons in the forefront ; behind him were a hundred opponents, who made more noise than all the others put together, and kept on shouting to him to close the sitting. The galleries joined in the strife ; Malouet was threatened, and two men actually came down into the Hall and took a deputy by the collar. Most of the four hundred soon returned to their seats and waited in dignified silence, and Bailly saved the situation by sitting still and doing nothing, while the hot-heads of both sides abused him. Between twelve and one the hundred got tired of shouting and melted away, and Bailly was again about to begin the roll-call when Biauzaat moved to put it off to the next sitting, as the Assembly was incomplete. His motion was accepted unanimously.²

On the next morning, the 17th, Siéyes's motion passed by a large majority. The National Assembly constituted itself, continued the President and secretaries in office, took an oath

¹ It had been freely used to designate the States-General, as will have been noticed.

² Bailly, i. 150-6 ; Duquesnoy, i. 101 ; *Point du Jour* (27 avril-17 juin), 406-7.

to fulfil its functions, voted an address to the King, and then "decree-ing" like a sovereign¹ passed its first laws. In order to prevent a dissolution, a declaration was made that although all the present taxes were illegal, because the nation had not consented to them, they should continue to be levied provisionally as long as the Assembly sat, and no longer. In order to reassure public opinion, all the creditors of the State were put under the safeguard of the national honour, and the Assembly undertook to busy itself at once with measures for remedying the prevailing dearth. These first acts of the Assembly had been drawn up by Target and Le Chapelier, and Camus was dispatched to Baudouin's printing-house in Paris to get them printed, in order that they might be forwarded to all the provinces.

At the evening sitting the King's belated answer to the explanatory address of the 12th was read. It was directed to "M. Bailly, *doyen* of the Tiers-état", and reproved the Tiers for speaking of the "privileged classes," and for not accepting Necker's Plan of conciliation.²

The new address to the King, voted that morning, had now to be prepared; the 'Conciliatory Commissaries' were again charged to draw it up, and as only three of them, Le Chapelier, Bergasse, and Barnave, were present, the duty devolved on them. They withdrew to perform their task, and Guillotin lectured the Assembly on the want of ventilation in the Hall. The Commissaries returned with two addresses; the two elder men had worked together, and Barnave had written one alone. Le Chapelier read the first, composed by himself and Bergasse, which was much applauded for its "noble sentiments"; and Barnave then read his which, though not so 'noble', was thought to show "a feeling which the other lacked," and found its partisans. Bailly proposed that the two should be blended, but Barnave, with a graceful modesty which delighted every one, withdrew his address, saying that he "felt all the superiority" of the other, that he should not have ventured to read his own composition had it not been that several deputies who had seen and approved it had advised him to do so, and that he had complied, "less from self-love than

¹ Bailly, i. 171.

² *Procès-verbal*, no. i. 11-16.

from deference." Target insisted that a passage from Barnave's address should be incorporated with the other, and the Assembly agreed to this ;¹ but the amended address was never presented. In the following year, when the *Point du Jour* published an account of the early days of the Assembly, the editor asked Barnave for a copy of his address to print. He replied characteristically that he had not kept one ; perhaps M. Bergasse might have the original.²

There was no sitting on the 18th, when a deputation followed the procession of the Holy Sacrament, but on the 19th four important committees were chosen. Barnave was put on one called *de Rédaction*, whose business it was to draw up the decrees and addresses of the Assembly.

He did a chivalrous thing that day. After Camus had gone to Paris with the decrees on the 17th, some changes had been made in the wording, on Siéyes's representations, at the evening sitting ; and Siéyes had sent a copy to the printers with the alterations, signed by the President and one secretary. Camus, who found the proofs altered in the morning, had corrected them back to the original. Siéyes was extremely angry at this, and made a complaint to the Assembly, calling Camus's conduct in ignoring the authentic copy "astonishing". It was in vain that Camus defended himself, saying that as he knew nothing of the alterations he had thought it right to keep to the original ; Siéyes would not be satisfied. Pison du Galland, the other secretary, repeated Siéyes's reproaches, and the Assembly began to turn against Camus. It took some courage to stand up to Siéyes in the height of his power and his prestige, but Barnave was equal to it, and risked his own popularity to save Camus. 'M. Camus,' he insisted, 'could not know what had happened after he left, and the Assembly ought to do justice to his prudence. A secretary has no right to change the wording of decrees which have been entrusted to him because other copies are sent after him ; he owes an absolute obedience to his mandate.' The Assembly saw the truth of this contention and Camus was justified.³

¹ Le Hodey, i. 129-33 ; cf. *Point du Jour* (27 avril-17 juin), 414-15.

² *Point du Jour* (ditto), 415. The papers had not reported the contents of either address.

³ Le Hodey, i. 144-7.

That same evening the clerical chamber passed a resolution to verify credentials in common. A crowd in the courtyard cheered the liberal clergy and hooted the recalcitrants as they came out, for the attitude of the people had become threatening and, in Paris, lists of members who had voted against Siéyes's motion were circulated, and threats of vengeance were uttered. The Government, on its side, was preparing to strike a blow. The King had been borne off to Marly by the Nobles' party, after the death of the Dauphin, and had slipped from under Necker's influence. The leaders of the Assembly knew themselves to be in hourly danger of arrest.¹

¹ Bailly, i. 178-80 ; Thibaudeau, 75.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST REVOLUTION

FOR some days there had been talk of a "Royal Sitting", but on the 19th nothing had happened to show that it was imminent, and Bailly adjourned the Assembly till eight o'clock next morning as usual. At six-thirty in the morning of Saturday, June 20th, he was informed that the public was being refused admission to the great Hall, and on sending out to make enquiries learned that the Hall was surrounded by guards, and that a notice had been posted up which announced that, the King having resolved to hold a Royal Sitting on the 22nd, the halls of the Assemblies of the three Orders were closed for preparations. A tardy note from de Brézé, which was brought to him soon after, confirmed the news. Bailly wrote in answer that, having received no orders from the King, he should go to the Assembly at eight o'clock, as was his duty; dressed in haste, summoned the two secretaries, and started with them as if nothing had happened. He found a crowd round the principal entrance in the avenue de Paris; astonished deputies were arriving every moment, and a sentinel kept the gate. The Assembly was locked out.

The sky was overcast and rain was falling. By favour of the officer on guard Bailly and the secretaries were allowed to go inside to fetch their papers; they had some difficulty in persuading their colleagues not to try to force a way in after them. While they were within, a second note came from de Brézé; he assured Bailly that he had acted by the King's orders. There was therefore nothing for it but to come out again into the rain and join the Assembly in the avenue.

The deputies were of one mind to-day and one thing seemed imperative to all; the royal authority must be defied and the sitting held somewhere—out of doors, in the place d'Armes in front of the Palace, if need were. Guillotin suggested the tennis-court not far off, beyond the avenue de Sceaux, and thither they marched in a body, with Bailly at their head,

a few men being sent on in front to secure the court and prevent a surprise. The owner received them gladly, gave the Assembly what furniture he could—five or six benches and a table—and all was ready. A watch was at first kept at the door by the deputies themselves, but they were soon relieved by the special guards of the Assembly, who hastened to offer their services. Outside the people waited in great crowds, dimly conscious that the fate of France was hanging in the balance.¹

The building was small and bare, nothing more than an ordinary tennis-court, with a covered way round part of the walls, and two galleries, one on each side, for spectators to watch the games from; they were filled with the public on June 20th. The tennis-court stands to-day much as it stood then, religiously preserved; but the ceiling, which used to be blue dotted with golden *fleurs de lis*, has been altered, the two galleries which hung on the outside of the two longer walls have been removed, and the pavement is new; the old floor, trodden by the feet of the liberators of France, was torn up and thrown away under the Second Empire. Bailly, who refused a chair because he would not sit while the Assembly stood, took his place at the middle of the long wall opposite the door and faced the deputies; his statue now marks the spot.² He opened the proceedings by reading his correspondence with de Brézé.

What was to be done? The right of the King to suspend the sittings of the Assembly was not openly discussed, but it was tacitly disallowed. Some of the hotter heads were preparing to move that the Assembly should march to Paris, where it would be received with open arms,³ when Mounier, who was wiser, proposed that the members should take an

¹ Bailly, i. 181, &c.

² Vatel; *Notice historique sur la Salle du Jeu de Paume*, 15, 70 (Versailles, 1883); *Détail des circonstances relatives à l'inauguration du monument placé le 20 juin 1790 dans le Jeu de Paume*, p. 11 (B. M. R. 68).

³ Bailly, i. 189. Mallet du Pan (*Mercure britannique*, v. 19) says that "Siéyes, Barnave, and the Club Breton" had determined on this. The Club Breton had had no chance of determining on anything, and Barnave supported Mounier.

oath not to separate till the constitution had been made. His motion was carried with acclamations. He seems to have suggested a formula ; " some changes were made in it ", says the contemporary account of Le Hodey, " M. Target, M. Le Chapelier, M. Barnave supported the proposal " ; and the reporter dwells in vague terms on their eloquence and courage. Alexandre Lameth, writing in 1828, says that Le Chapelier and Barnave drew up the oath ; he may very likely be right, but, as far as we know, his testimony is uncorroborated. Other contemporary accounts tell us nothing definite on the point ; that of the *Journal des Débats*, published in 1791, when the event was fresh in men's memories, says that Mounier, Target, Le Chapelier, and Barnave spoke ; it gives some of the heads of their speeches, but all rolled into one, and makes them say that a solemn oath ought to be taken. Mounier certainly proposed the oath, the three others as certainly supported it, and it seems most probable that portions of the oath were taken from the speeches of each.¹ The end of the introductory paragraph is very like Barnave.

This was the oath : " The National Assembly considering that as it is called upon to determine the constitution of the kingdom, to bring about the regeneration of the order of the State, and to maintain the true principles of the monarchy, nothing can hinder it from continuing its deliberations, in whatever place it may be forced to establish itself, and that, in fine, wherever its members are met together, there is the National Assembly :

" Resolves that all the members of this Assembly shall now take a solemn oath, never to separate, and to meet together wherever circumstances shall require, till the constitution of the kingdom is established and secured on firm foundations ; and that the same oath having been taken, all the members and each of them in particular, shall confirm this immovable resolution by their signatures."

Bailly read the oath so loud that the crowds outside heard

¹ Le Hodey, i. 166 ; A. Lameth, i. 24 ; Mounier, *Exposé*, pt. i. 9 ; *Journal des Débats et des Décrets* (17 juin-1 sept.) 16. Barnave says nothing on the subject. The *Journal de l'abbé Jallet*, printed in 1871, seems unprocurable. Such other contemporary accounts as I have been able to see throw no light.

it; the deputies all raised their right hands and swore it, and then, from deputies and crowd, burst forth a shout of—*Vive le roi!* The constituencies were next called over in alphabetical order, and the deputies of each came up in turn to the table to affix their signatures. When it was discovered that one man, Martin Dauch, instead of abstaining from putting his name down, had written it with *opposant* after it, great indignation was manifested. Bailly stilled the storm, and smuggled the offender out by a back-door to save him from the vengeance of the people. The Assembly soon grew calmer, let the signature stand, and recorded that the decision was made unanimously, except for one vote.¹

The oath was taken between eleven and twelve,² the signing was not over till the evening, and now another address to the King was proposed. The deputies still retained a touching faith in Louis, as distinct from his advisers, and still hoped that an appeal to him might be successful. Le Chapelier improvised an address, Barnave improvised another, other deputies did the same, but the idea was finally dropped, and after adjourning till Monday the 22nd the Assembly separated at six o'clock, having been on foot since eight.³

The Royal Sitting was put off till Tuesday, and on Monday, as more space than the tennis-court afforded was wanted, the Assembly repaired to the cathedral of St. Louis, and there, as had been hoped, it was joined by the majority of the Clergy. They were led solemnly in by the Archbishops of Vienne and Bordeaux. Two of the Dauphinois nobles, Blacons and d'Agoult, joined also.

But the Court meant to crush the Commons and break their union with the Clergy. During the night of Monday, Bailly was called from his bed by three strangers in the street, and letting them in with some tremors, found that they were three friendly noblemen, the duc d'Aiguillon, the baron de Menou, and the young comte Mathieu de Montmorency, who had

¹ Bailly, i. 190, &c.; *Procès-verbal*, no. 3, p. 6.

² This appears from the *Procès-verbal de la Société du Serment du Jeu de Paume*; see *Détail des circonstances*, &c., (which is an extract from this *procès-verbal*.) p. 11.

³ Le Hodey, i. 169; *Point du Jour*, i. 25.

come to tell him that the King's Council was divided, that Necker did not approve of the measures decided on, that he was not coming to the Royal Sitting, and would probably be dismissed that day.¹

The sitting was to open at ten ; the two first Orders had been directed to enter by the avenue, the Tiers-état by the side entrance in the rue des Chantiers, and four thousand soldiers had been posted round the Hall and in the vicinity to guard every approach and to keep the people away. It was a wet day ; the wooden gallery at the entrance was too small to hold all the deputies, and many of them were outside in the rain. After a long wait Bailly began to knock at the closed door ; he knocked again and again, but admittance was always refused, and he only obtained it finally by threatening that the deputies would go away. De Brézé then explained that the delay had been caused by the sudden death of one of the King's secretaries. Yet when the Commons entered, walking two and two in perfect silence, they found the other two Orders already seated.²

The King appeared at last, read a speech reproaching the States-General with their lack of concord, and ordered the reading of two "Declarations". The first ordained that the old distinction of the three Orders should be preserved ; declared the decisions made by the Tiers-état on the 17th null and unconstitutional ; forbade the three Orders to discuss together either the constitution of the States-General, or the ancient rights of the Orders, or the privileges of the first two Orders, or any feudal rights ; and excluded the public from their sittings. The second granted reforms ; no taxes should be levied, no loans raised (except in case of war), without the consent of the States-General, who were to have control of the finances. The *taille* and the *corvée* should be abolished, and equal taxation was promised, but all feudal rights were to be respected. The use of *lettres de cachet* was to be restricted ; the freedom of the Press to be enlarged ; the *gabelle* to be made lighter ; with other reforms, on all of which the States-General would be consulted.

¹ Bailly, i. 205-6.

² Le Hodey, i. 197 ; Duquesnoy, i. 118 ; Bailly, i. 207-8.

The Commons listened in silence ; the minority of the Clergy and the majority of the Nobles applauded. The King then made another speech, in which he informed the ' States-General ', that if they abandoned him " alone, I will do what is good for my people," and ordering them to separate at once, and to meet next morning in their respective chambers, he departed.¹

He was followed by the Nobles and by all the Clergy except a few curés ; the Commons sat on in silence. Workmen came in and began to take down the dais noisily. De Brézé entered and went up to Bailly : " Sir, did you not hear the King's orders ? " " Sir," replied Bailly, " the Assembly adjourned till after the Royal Sitting ; I cannot dismiss it till it has debated the matter ; " and then, turning to those around him, he said : " I think the Nation in assembly cannot receive an order." At this moment Mirabeau stepped from his place, his best self all aflame, and thundered out the indignant words which established his fame, and gave him a place in his colleagues' hearts for ever after : " Go and tell those who send you that we are here by the will of the people, and that we will only go if we are driven out by bayonets." The Assembly answered with a shout ; de Brézé vanished in confusion, the workmen dropped their tools.²

Pison du Galland now began to propose an adjournment, but already Camus and Barnave had risen, asking for leave to speak. Barnave gave way deferentially to Camus, who moved that a declaration should be made, that the Assembly persisted in its previous decisions.³ Barnave seconded him in a speech that was remembered :

" Your steps depend upon your situation ; your decisions depend upon yourselves alone. You have declared what you are ; you have no need of sanction ; the granting of taxes

¹ *Moniteur*, i. 92-5, reprinted from the *Journal des Débats* ; Bailly, i. 208-14.

² Bailly, i. 214 ; Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 137 ; Thibaudeau, 77. The version of Mirabeau's words is that which the Jacobins engraved on his bust.

³ Duquesnoy, i. 119 ; *Mercure de France*, 4 July, p. 39 ; *Correspondance de MM. les Députés de la province d'Anjou*, i. p. 209 ; Barnave, *Introduction*, 107.

depends only on you. Sent by the nation as the organ of its will, to make a constitution, you are the National Assembly ; it is for you to remain assembled as long as you believe it necessary for the interests of your constituents. Such was our situation yesterday ; what has been done, then, to-day ? ” ¹

Others joined in ; Pétion, Buzot, Garat, the abbé Grégoire. “ This is a Bed of Justice in a National Assembly ! ” cried Glezen, and Siéyes repeated Barnave’s thought : “ You are to-day what you were yesterday. ” ² Camus’s motion passed unanimously. Then, to secure the deputies against arrest, it was decided, on Mirabeau’s motion and by a huge majority, to declare that the person of each deputy was inviolable, and that any individuals, corporations, or tribunals, who should dare to arrest or detain him for anything said or done in the States-General, should be considered guilty of a capital crime and prosecuted accordingly.

The Assembly then broke up. Whilst it was sitting the guards had actually invested the Hall for half an hour. They were withdrawn, so said rumour, when it became known that the minority of the Nobles was determined to come to the defence of the Commons, sword in hand. ³

Thus did the Assembly, defenceless inside a cordon of troops, in a town which depended on the Court, once more vindicate its own sovereignty and the rights of the nation. “ We might perish, our work would have survived us,” says Bailly. And to a minister who asked why the Assembly was not satisfied with reforms which would have been received enthusiastically ten years before, and what did it want, he replied : “ To do things itself, and not that you should do them. ” ⁴

Necker’s door was besieged by the people and by deputies of the Commons, and when he was sent for to the Palace and reconciled to the King there was great rejoicing. But this admiration of Necker, it should be observed, was not shared by the advanced party, and about this time Alexandre de Lameth was openly talking of their wish to get rid of him. ⁵

¹ *Point du Jour*, i. 42.

² *Ibid.*, i. 42, 43.

³ Bailly, i. 217 ; Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 138 note, letter of Branche, deputy.

⁴ Bailly, i. 218-19, 221.

⁵ Dampmartin, *Événements*, i. 31 ; Bailly, i. 223.

For several days the Hall was still surrounded by troops, the Commons were still only allowed to use the side entrance, the public was still excluded ; fresh troops, even, were brought into the town. It was all to no purpose ; the majority of the Clergy joined the Assembly again on the 24th, and on the 25th the minority of the Nobles followed, headed by their spokesman, Clermont-Tonnerre. The duc d'Orléans was amongst them and many bearers of the greatest names in France ; but several who were warmest in the cause of liberty, as Lafayette and Charles de Lameth, were not there, not from want of courage, but forbidden by their mandates to act against the decision of their Chamber.¹

The people, who had heard of the arrival of the Nobles, began clamouring to be let in, and tried to force the door in the rue des Chantiers. Hearing the noise Barnave rose, and brought forward a motion which had been made by Mounier the day before ; it was, that a deputation should be sent to the King to ask for the removal of the troops.

"It is strange and surprising," he said, "that the nation should be forbidden to enter the national Hall ! Here, in this august place, its interests are covenanted, here its fate is decided. We ought, therefore, to act under its eyes ; our work must be done in the face of the nation. . . . To surround us with guards in this manner is to be wanting in respect to the nation, it is to insult the nation in the persons of its representatives. Can we deliberate freely, surrounded by arms ? Are we in the middle of a camp ? Yes, this freedom, so much extolled, so often promised, is void and illusory still. Is it to be wondered at, after this, that heads are turned, that spirits grow hot and bitter, that the people revolts, and that riots are frequent ? " ²

On the 26th the minority of the Clergy came in, headed by the Archbishop of Paris, who had been, most undeservedly, stoned by the Versailles mob as he was leaving a meeting of

¹ A Lameth, i. 37 note ; Duquesnoy, i. 128.

² Le Hodey, i. 224-5. Cf. Duquesnoy, i. 129 ; "A young Barnave, of whom I have often spoken, came with his usual flux of words to denounce this attempt." Duquesnoy, ministerially inclined, always hated Barnave. For Barnave's motion see *Correspondance des Députés d'Anjou*, i. 234.

his Chamber, and had narrowly escaped with his life. Paris was sending deputations to express adhesion to all that the National Assembly had done; the Gardes françaises, the Court's own special regiment, quartered in the capital, were already fraternizing with the people. The great stroke of the Government had failed. The King made virtue of necessity, and wrote to the Clergy and Nobles who still held out, that they were to join the rest. At five o'clock on the 27th Bailly, who had gone home to dinner, was sent for in a hurry, and ran to the Hall to find all the deputies in their proper places and the presidents of the Clergy and the Nobles standing, very cross, at the head of their respective Chambers. Great was the public joy! Crowds rushed to the Palace to cheer King, Queen and Dauphin, and then on to cheer Necker. Versailles was illuminated, and Paris, whither the news soon spread, rejoiced with Versailles.¹

The Commons, who had throughout religiously kept the seats of the other Orders vacant, did all they could to make them welcome, and the proper proportion of Clergy and Nobles was placed on each committee and every deputation; but the disaffected did not resign themselves to their fate without many protests.

"Nothing can be duller than our Assembly till we have ended all the preliminaries; verifications, judgements on credentials, rejections of protests, and other formalities, which the complete reunion of the two first Orders with us has brought in its train," wrote Barnave to his mother. "In the meanwhile, to the great satisfaction of the deputation, we have the Archbishop of Vienne for general president of the National Assembly, and M. Mounier for one of the six secretaries."² The Archbishop had been elected when Bailly's term of office was over.

The malcontents enlivened matters by raising the question of whether "imperative mandates" were binding, in the hope that the Assembly would decide that they were, in which case

¹ Bailly, i. 250, &c.; Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 147.

² Draft of letter, dated Versailles, 4 July 1789. *A.N.W.* 13. 116. Printed by M. de Beylié in 'Lettres inédites de Barnave', *Bulletin de l'Académie Delphinale*, 4^{me} série, xix. 285.

many members, who had been instructed by their constituents to sit in separate Chambers, would have been obliged to resign, and new elections would have been necessitated. The Assembly left the decision to the individual conscience, after an interesting debate, in which Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, came to the front on the popular side, and Barnave summed up the arguments in a brilliant speech.¹

The King now appeared anxious to be on good terms with the Assembly, and amenities were exchanged. But the truce was hollow, and the Court was preparing for a master stroke.

"The Government has become quite gracious to us these last few days," writes Barnave on July 4th; "nevertheless it is bringing up a great mass of troops round us, and there is no doubt that the enemies of the State still have the intention and the hope of troubling us. The dearth of provisions is felt here more and more, and it is feared that Paris may soon be without bread."²

Troops had indeed been coming up, and yet more troops followed; troops to eat up the scanty bread of hungry Paris; foreign mercenaries for the most part, Swiss or Germans, who would have no sympathy with the people; troops all round Paris; troops in the Champ de Mars; troops guarding the bridge at Sèvres on the road to Versailles; troops at Versailles, who took up their quarters one night in the Orangery, where they were visited and cajoled by Court and Princes. By the 10th there were more than seventeen regiments, with artillery, in and round Paris. The Queen and the Palace folk walked with radiant faces on the terrace at Versailles and sneered at the deputies as they passed.³ Paris was to be cowed, the Assembly dissolved; "Alone, I will do what is good for my people."

Paris was not cowed but lashed into fury. The Assembly did its best to avert the coming ruin; Mirabeau, now in full revolutionary career, taking the lead. On the 8th he moved that the King should be begged to command the levy of

¹ 7 July. *Le Hodey*, i. 400; *Gorsas*, i. 58; *Mercure de France*, 18 July, 133.

² Letter just quoted above.

³ *Bailly*, i. 319, 361; *A. Lameth*, i. 41; *Thibaudeau*, 79.

a citizen-guard to keep order in Paris and Versailles, and that an address should be presented to him entreating him to send away the troops. The motion would have been adjourned but that Barnave and some others went to the popular Lafayette and asked him to make his first speech in its favour.¹ The citizen-guard was dropped for the moment ; the address was voted, and Mirabeau read that famous exhortation in which he warned Louis of the dangers he was running : " Great revolutions have had less conspicuous causes ; more than one enterprise fatal to nations and to kings has begun in a manner less sinister and less formidable." ² The King replied on the 11th, that the troops were necessary to prevent fresh disorders in Versailles and Paris, and that this was all they were intended for ; but that if the Assembly disliked remaining among them, he would transfer the sitting to Noyon or Soissons and go himself to Compiègne, to be near.

That evening Necker was dismissed, and started secretly for Brussels. The news reached Paris on Sunday morning, the 12th ; Camille Desmoulins roused the crowd in the Palais Royal and made them take the green cockade ; the busts of Necker and d'Orléans were carried through the streets in triumph ; the Prince de Lambesc, trying to disperse the demonstrators, charged into the Tuileries Gardens ; and the Revolution had begun. In the night the barriers were burnt, bands of robbers began to pillage, and the prisons were opened. On Monday the National Guard sprang up spontaneously, to protect honest citizens ; on Tuesday Paris, at the mercy of thousands of troops, who stood by inactive, in the teeth of guns and powder that could have blown the Faubourg St. Antoine to pieces, took the Bastille, and saved the Assembly and France.

The Assembly spent this perilous time in wise activity, and the first result of the common danger was that the Orders

¹ Lafayette, ii. 361.

² *Moniteur*, i. 140, from the *Journal des Débats* version. The words " and to kings ", read to Louis (A. Lameth, i. 47 note), were omitted in the official version. Dumont claims to have written the address, but it is hard to believe it, and A. Lameth, a member of the Comité de Rédaction, says (i. 49 note) that the address was composed almost under his eyes.

were drawn together and welded for the moment into one. On the Monday morning, as soon as the dismissal of Necker and the ministry, and the appointment of reactionary successors was announced, Mounier moved that the King should be entreated to recall Necker and three of the other ministers. A debate followed, in which many motions were made and much eloquence was displayed. Barnave, whose speech was one of the best, proposed: (1) a vote of thanks to the dismissed ministers; (2) a declaration that their successors have not the confidence of the nation; (3) a request for the withdrawal of the troops and the establishment of a civil militia; (4) a declaration that the King's advisers should be held responsible for whatever happened.¹ Other members made similar proposals. The debate was interrupted by news of the night's events in Paris, and a deputation was sent to the King forthwith, to beg him to withdraw the troops, to establish a civil militia, and to recall the ministers; a second deputation made ready to carry his answer to Paris if it should prove favourable. The King replied that he alone could judge what measures were requisite for the safety of Paris, and that a deputation from the Assembly would be of no use in the capital.

The Assembly, indignant at this reply, resolved upon a kind of manifesto, and eight commissaries, of whom Barnave was one, were appointed to draw it up.² It set forth: that Necker and the dismissed ministers carried the esteem and regret of the Assembly with them; that the Assembly would never cease insisting on the withdrawal of the troops and the establishment of a civil militia; that there could be no intermediary between the King and the Assembly; that the King's present ministers and advisers were personally responsible for all that was happening and might ensue, his agents, civil and military, responsible for any enterprise against the nation; that

¹ Gorsas, i. 151; Duquesnoy, i. 195.

² Barnave (*Introduction*, 107) says that he was one of the eight commissaries appointed on the 14th; the 13th was the day, but it was all one sitting. There is no record of the appointment of these commissaries in the *procès-verbal*, nor in contemporary newspapers (as far as I know), but the *Journal des Débats* (1791) speaks of it, and Duquesnoy's *Journal* (i. 197-8) confirms Barnave as to the number.

the public debt having been guaranteed by the nation, no power had the right to pronounce the infamous word Bankruptcy ; that the Assembly persisted in all its previous decisions.¹ It was next decided that the sitting should be continuous, and though the debates were suspended many members passed the night in the Hall.

On the 14th the Assembly, now, as always, calmly courageous in the face of danger, resumed its ordinary business and elected a Constitutional Committee. In the afternoon it became known for certain that Paris was in insurrection ; deputies constantly left the Hall to walk into the avenue and look towards the capital ; they thought they heard the noise of artillery, and they saw the Prince de Lambesc go by like a flash of lightning. Rumours flew about that the King was departing, leaving the Assembly at the mercy of the foreign soldiery.²

Not long after five, while a new motion of Mirabeau's for the withdrawal of the troops was being discussed, the vicomte de Noailles hurried in, fresh from Paris, with the news of the siege of the Bastille. Another deputation was sent to the King to inform him of the state of Paris, and even as it returned, bearing his unsatisfactory answer, a fresh one started with new tidings of the fight, only to be told that, though the King's heart was bleeding, he found it impossible to believe that the orders given to the troops could be the cause of the disasters in Paris. Again the Assembly sat through the night, and yet another deputation was on the point of starting for the Palace in the morning, when the duc de Liancourt, who had succeeded in enlightening the monarch ("Sire, this is not a revolt but a revolution"), came to announce that his Majesty himself was at hand. The King entered with his brothers ; he looked slightly perturbed ; he had come to surrender. In words that were thought touching he protested his confidence in the Assembly, asked for advice and help, and announced that he was sending the troops away. There was frantic applause, there were tears of joy ; Louis had given his people the right to love him again, and all his misdeeds were forgotten. The deputies, in a body, escorted him back to the Palace,

¹ Printed *Moniteur*, i. 156.

² Bailly, i. 360-1 ; Thibaudeau, 84.

making a chain round him to keep the happy multitude from pressing too close upon him.¹

Then back to business. Barnave, who always kept a cool head through scenes of enthusiasm, made a motion to ask for the dismissal of the ministers, on the ground that they did not possess the public confidence, and Mirabeau supported him ; but the departure of a large deputation for Paris interrupted the debate.²

Mirabeau made a somewhat similar motion next morning (the 16th), read an address to the King, and said that Barnave's motion ought also to be discussed. Barnave accordingly brought it forward again.³ He had shown it beforehand to Mounier, who approved of it in all respects, but as soon as Barnave had made it, Mounier thought fit to oppose, on the pretext that in proposing it Barnave had advanced principles which were inadmissible.⁴ A debate on the right of the Assembly to influence the Crown in the choice of its ministers sprang up between Mounier, Barnave and Mirabeau. Mounier maintained that the Assembly could not refuse its confidence to any minister whom the King chose to appoint, and could only demand Necker's recall because the King had asked for advice. Barnave took the view that the Assembly had the right to refuse to correspond with a minister who did not possess the confidence of the nation, but not the right to insist on the recall of a particular minister, only to express a wish for it. Mirabeau went even further, and an address was being drawn up when news came that all the ministers had been dismissed, and that the King was going to visit Paris.⁵

¹ Bailly, ii. 9 ; Le Hodey, ii. 42-4 ; Thibaudeau, 85-6.

² This is Barnave's version of the interruption, in the draft of a letter (*A. N. W.* 12. 198, printed by M. de Beylié, loc. cit., 291), and he must be right. He does not say that he made the motion. Le Hodey (ii. 46) says that Clermont-Tonnerre got the debate adjourned.

³ Members had to write their motions and give them to the president ; this motion is exhibited in the Musée des Archives.

⁴ Barnave, draft of a letter to a friend, Paris, 24 Nov. 1789. *A. N. W.* 12. 16.

⁵ Le Hodey, ii. 50, &c. ; *Point du Jour*, i. 216, &c. ; *Mercure de France*, 1 Aug., 9 ; *Assemblée Nationale du jeudi 16 juillet 1789* (7 pp., *B. M. R.* 68).

The recall of Necker and the other ministers soon followed, as did the "first emigration", when the comte d'Artois, the Princes de Condé and de Conti, the Polignacs and other nobles of the extreme party left the kingdom. Nor were these the most striking consequences of the first revolution. On the 15th Bailly was chosen mayor of Paris, and Lafayette commander of the new Parisian National Guard, a post which put the keeping of order in Paris into his hands, and made him one of the most powerful men in the kingdom.

The deputies of the advanced party were quick to perceive the immense importance of the new institution of National Guards, and urged their constituents (with whom they were all in constant correspondence¹), to promote its organization. Barnave writes about this time to an unknown correspondent, doubtless in Grenoble: "Civil militia are being set on foot on all sides. The destiny of the nation is assured by its good conduct, but it will only avoid civil war by showing a firm front. Our enemies have been obliged to give way; nothing but their impotence holds them back, nothing but a parade of the national will can discourage them. What is wanted, then? Two things; numerous addresses to the National Assembly, and a civil militia ready to take the field. No good citizen should refuse to enlist in this way. The rich are most interested in the general well-being. The greater part of the Parisian militia consists of *good bourgeois*, and it is this which makes it as certain to keep order as it is formidable to tyranny. Not a moment must be lost in spreading these ideas in all parts of the province. I am writing to you only. I rely entirely on the energy of your city, which naturally ought to start the movement. The same thing will take place in all the other provinces, *it has been concerted here*. Adieu." ²

Barnave here defines admirably the functions of the National Guard, that huge body of volunteers, who were equally ready

¹ The correspondence of the Dauphiné deputation was printed as a journal from April to July; Maignien, *Bibliog. historique*, nos. 479 and 539.

² Draft of letter. *A. N. W.* 12. 199. Printed by M. de Beylié, loc. cit., 292.

to oppose despotism, and disorder, and who preserved the kingdom from anarchy.

He was not on the deputation appointed to accompany the King to Paris on the 17th, but he was one of the two or three hundred deputies who joined it informally, and who protected the King from possible danger by surrounding his carriage as it moved through the streets.¹

"You will never see anything which will give you an idea of the city of Paris last Friday," he writes to a young friend in Dauphiné, Rigaud de l'Isle. "On the route of the King and the deputies, lined by a militia of 90,000 men, were more than 600,000 persons of every sex, age and condition, clapping their hands, crying *vive la nation, vive la liberté!* and, at long intervals, *vive le roi!* The most perfect order; not a single accident; the spectacle of a military camp, full of ardour and well disciplined, side by side with a magnificent public fête." He might truly say that the events of the last few days "seemed like magic."²

Public joy was soon dimmed for him by private sorrow. His father died at St. Robert on the day the Bastille fell, and his mother, too much overcome to write herself, had the news broken to him by Revol.³ The distance to Grenoble was so great that he could not leave his duties to go home.

¹ Bailly, ii. 57, 62.

² Draft of letter dated Versailles 19 July 1789. *A.N. W.* 13. 109.

³ Brun-Durand, loc. cit.; Madame Barnave to her son, 20 July 1789. *A.N. W.* 13. 166.

CHAPTER VII

“ FATAL WORDS ”

WE now come to Barnave's celebrated and unfortunate slip. Among the liberal nobles who made the Hall of the Assembly resound with their eloquence, none was so much admired as the stout comte de Lally-Tolendal, whose flowery rhetoric roused immense enthusiasm among hearers in whom a taste for oratory had not yet grown critical, and filled column after column of appreciative newspapers. Lally's history excited sympathy; his distinguished father, whom he had never known, had been wrongfully accused and cruelly executed under Louis XV, and Lally's early years had been spent in vindicating his father's memory; a fact he never forgot or allowed anyone else to forget. He stood before the world as the model of filial piety, and his speeches were a well-spring of gush. He could speak of the Commons as “ watering ” Necker with their “ virtuous tears ”, but he had ability, and knew that his gush was effective. “ He lived with a pocket-handkerchief in his hand,” says Michelet,¹ and some wit hit him off in a sentence, “ the most feeling of fat men.”

Paris was still restless, there had been riots in the vicinity, and the Assembly was anxious to prevent further disorders. To this end Lally proposed, on July 20th, to issue a proclamation to the nation, exhortatory and minatory in tone, declaring that disturbances must cease. The majority felt that, as most of the country was peaceful, such a proclamation would cause unnecessary alarm, that it would be ungracious to appear to blame the very men who had just secured liberty by force of arms, and that constructive and not repressive measures were wanted. The motion was therefore adjourned. The great Hall was then closed for two days, for alterations, and the Assembly did not meet there again till July 23rd.²

¹ *Discours de M. le comte de Lally-Tolendal à l'Assemblée Nationale, le lundi 13 juillet 1789*, p. 6. *Procès-verbal*, i. Michelet, Book IV, chap. ii.

² There was a short sitting in St. Louis on the 21st, but no debate.

The sitting then opened with the reading of letters about the mysterious "brigands" who were threatening many places in the country with destruction,¹ and terrible news was announced before long. The Paris mob had murdered a former administrator, Foulon, and his son-in-law, Berthier, the Intendant of Paris, under circumstances of peculiar brutality, on the 22nd. These two men had a bad reputation as oppressors of the poor. Attempts have been made to show that they were calumniated, and one is glad to give them the benefit of any doubt; but it is certain that at the time of their death they were generally believed to have been rapacious and cruel, and that their frightful end aroused much horror but very little pity.²

Lally thought the occasion favourable for bringing his proclamation forward again; Mirabeau made a counter-motion for sending a member to each district in Paris, to promote united action; a complicated debate followed, in which many motions were made, and Lally and Mirabeau each spoke several times. It is impossible to unravel the exact order of the speeches from incomplete contemporary accounts, but apparently Lally had proposed his proclamation, Mirabeau his deputation, Mounier had supported Lally, and others had spoken, when Lally rose again. Gorsas, in his *Courrier de Versailles*, gives the only full report of this speech.

"Suddenly M. de Lally rises, and gives the Assembly the most touching picture of a scene he had witnessed, thus: 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'it makes me shudder still! Yesterday; yesterday morning, a young man [Berthier's son], pale, trembling, weeping, comes to throw himself into my arms, to precipitate himself at my knees—Alas! gentlemen, if I dared to recall to you—if my heart did not bleed to tell you—He had only strength to address me in these few words: 'You had a father whom you cherished, you defended him through fifteen years: ah! Sir, Sir, in the name of this beloved father, cannot you save the life of mine?'

¹ *Journal des Débats*, introductory volume, 233.

² e. g. Mounier says (*Exposé*, pt. i. 24 note), "I do not know whether these two men had deserved torments."

" ' At once I fly to the Assembly ; unfortunately it was not sitting. [Of course Lally must have known this.] If you had been there my plea would have been short,' " and he proceeded to make it. " ' Doubtless I should have moved you ; I should have excited your pity ; I should have drawn tears from you, but alas ! my voice could not reach you.' " &c., &c.

" This pathetic speech," comments Gorsas, " pronounced by M. de Lally in a soul-penetrating tone of voice, produced the effect he might have expected. As a skilful orator he profited by this moment of emotion to bring his proclamation forward again . . . a second time it is applauded."¹ Here, after reporting a word or two from Mirabeau, ends Gorsas's account, but it is clear that Barnave spoke either directly after Lally or after Mirabeau.

This is how Lally himself describes the incident in a pamphlet written in January 1790 : " I spoke in the name of a son whose father had just been massacred, and a son, wearing mourning for his, dared to reproach me with *feeling when I ought to be thinking* ;² and he added what I will not even repeat ; and every time he raised his arms during his blood-thirsty declamations, he showed to all eyes the mournful signs of his recent misfortune, the irrecusable witnesses of his barbarous insensibility." (i.e. hanging pieces of crape worn upon the sleeve) " . . . I contented myself with replying, that Tiberius *thought*, and deeply ; that Louis XII *felt* strongly."

¹ Gorsas, i. 337-9. The rest of the sitting was promised, but did not appear ; cf. Gaultier-Biauzat, ii. 196.

² Louis Blanc ii. 432, following Montjoye's *Ami du Roi . . . ou Histoire de la Révolution de France et de l'Assemblée Nationale* (Pt. iv. 143), which is not a history but a scurrilous and mendacious pamphlet, makes *Mirabeau* say to Lally, *You feel when you ought to be thinking*, and applies Lally's comments to Mirabeau, who had also just lost his father. The remark must be a résumé of what Barnave said ; if attributed to Mirabeau, " he added what I will not repeat " is meaningless, for the worst thing Mirabeau said was that Lally's " heart led his mind astray " (*Correspondance des Députés d'Anjou*, i. 460). In the account printed in the *Moniteur*, i. 191-2, Lally's speech is copied from Le Hodey, but the remark that before making his retort Lally " seemed to look at Mirabeau " is an interpolation, doubtless founded on Montjoye.

Yet even Lally, though he seems to have forgotten it, said also: "The people has long and great injuries to avenge; I will, if there is need, become the denouncer of its enemies." ¹

Let us now hear Barnave's straightforward account.

"But there is a circumstance over which I must not pass so lightly; it is a speech I made after the murders of Foulon and Berthier, in which I pronounced these words: 'Was it, then, so pure, the blood which has just been shed?'

"I think it is impossible to justify this expression, considering that it was uttered in a public assembly, and that if it had been deliberate it would be absolutely inexcusable.

"But, with equal truth, this is what I was feeling and how the words were forced from me.

"I have always regarded the faculty of keeping a cool head in moments of danger as one of the first qualifications of a man, and I even have a sort of contempt for those who give way to tears when they ought to be doing something. But this contempt, I confess, turns into a profound indignation, when I think I perceive that a certain display of feeling is only theatrical.

"This is what happened. Before the event was spoken of in the Assembly, Dêmeunier showed me a letter which informed him of it. I was much moved, and I assured him that I felt as he did the necessity of putting an end to such disorders. A moment after, M. de Lally made his denunciation. One would have thought that he would have spoken of Foulon and Berthier, of the state of Paris, of the necessity of stopping murders. No; he spoke about himself, about his sensibility, about his father; he ended by proposing a proclamation.

"Then I rose. I confess that my nerves were all on edge, and that the feeling I have spoken of carried me perhaps too far in the opposite direction. I said that I was grieved at these events, but that I did not think that we ought to renounce the Revolution on account of them; that all revolutions brought disasters with them, and that perhaps we ought to congratulate ourselves that only a small number of victims

¹ *Mémoire de M. le comte de Lally-Tollendal, ou seconde lettre à ses commettans*, Paris, Jan. 1790, p. 86; *Point du Jour*, i. 268.

could be laid to the charge of ours, and the blood, &c. That, for the rest, it better became legislators to look for the real means of arresting these evils than to give themselves up to lamentations ; that it was doubtful whether the class of the people which commits murders would be capable of appreciating all the beauties of a proclamation, or would be held back effectually by such feeble means ; and that if we wished to prevent the horrid calamities with which the whole kingdom seemed menaced, we must hasten to arm property against the brigands, and to give, for the time being, a great extension of power to the municipalities. I drew up a bill in this sense. This is the exact account of this incident, which was seized upon so successfully by hatred and party-spirit, that I have since seen many people who, having formed a complete idea of my whole person from these few words, were astonished to find that I had neither the face, nor the sound of voice, nor the manners of a ferocious man."

And again he says : " Before this time I had not met with any hatred ; welcomed almost everywhere, I did not know that I had any enemies but those of the cause I was defending.

" How short a time these illusions lasted ! Hardly had I pronounced the fatal words I have recalled, than I saw myself exposed to every kind of attack, to every calumny." ¹

It was a strange slip for so self-controlled a speaker, and it was so obviously a slip that it made no impression on his party. It lost him none of their esteem and it gained him no popularity with the violent. Some of the newspapers gave the gist of his speech ; only one, the aristocrat *Mercure de France*, written by the Genevese Mallet du Pan, reported the phrase, but without naming the speaker.²

But the aristocrats saw their chance. They were afraid of Barnave. There was nothing in his life to take hold of ; he had no wife to slander, a circumstance which deprived them of a favourite weapon ; they could and did call him

¹ *Introduction*, 107-9, 115.

² *Mercure de France*, 1 Aug., 45. It is also reported in the *Correspondance des Députés d'Anjou* (i. 464-5), with the remark, " this Stoicism was not to every one's taste."

"son of an attorney", but the reproach was not distinctive. After this slip they could say that he was cruel. To "discredit Barnave" was a good political move, and they held him up to execration as a bloodthirsty monster. They never mentioned him without alluding to his love of blood; they called him "little Nero", "cannibal", "tiger"; they spoke of him as the friend and pupil of the executioner. Quotations might be multiplied endlessly, we will give only three typical specimens.

One is from the *Actes des Apôtres*, that famous paper of the aristocrat party, which enjoys an undeserved reputation for wit among those who have not read it and a well-deserved reputation for obscenity among those who have. The passage occurs in a description of the popular leaders as wild beasts in a circus.

"The third is a little hyena, native of the mountains of the late Dauphiné, thin, slim, with a frightful mouth and teeth as broad as they are long. When it arrived in Paris it had a gentle and timid though cunning look; but it has learnt to howl with the wolves, it has become cruel and ferocious."

The allusions to Barnave's appearance will be appreciated. In another number of this paper is an account of his callous indifference on the death of his brother, too cruel to quote.

The next specimen is from a pamphlet called, *Letter to the constituents of the comte de Mirabeau*, published October 1789, and dealing chiefly with Mirabeau. "There is a very young deputy, well known in the National Assembly, a perfect monster from his birth." Here follows an account of the famous sentence, spoken "with a Caligula-like eloquence" . . . "Dauphinois, it is you who sent us this soul compounded of saltpetre and blood, and all human souls denounce him to you. He has shown himself the worthy disciple of the comte de Mirabeau, and the disciple burns to equal the master. What have you gained, Dauphinois, by choosing us a child? Did you not know that the most dangerous monster of all is a cruel child? But remember that a cruel child never yet became a worthy man. Dauphinois, reflect at last that you owe some reparation to France. After having tainted it with the

childhood of your Bar . . . , at least preserve it from his manhood."

And in 1792 the émigrés were still writing :

" But few ferocious characters
Among the tigers and the bears
More cruel are, more sanguinary
Than Barnave in these present years."¹

The aristocrats were, in a measure, permanently successful. Never perhaps has so much ado been made over one sentence. Nearly every writer on the Revolution has added his tribute of pious horror to the cairn of moral reflections which points it out ; the student grows weary of them. The accusation of cruelty was too transparently false to survive, but the slip of a moment has been treated as the customary attitude of mind, at this period, of " the misguided young man."

It is a pity that so few historians seem to have read the speech in which, eight days later, he summed up the debate on the arrest of Besenval. Besenval had commanded the troops round Paris on July 14th ; he had been arrested while fleeing, and had been released, *ultra vires*, by the Electors of Paris, at Necker's request ; he had been rearrested, and was in hourly danger of being brought back to Paris by force and lynched like Foulon. Barnave supported Target's motion that the arrest should be upheld ; " a judicial inquiry is the only way to prevent popular vengeance," he said ; but he was against blaming the action of the Electors, as many of the advanced party wished to do, and he was the first to insist that Besenval must be efficiently guarded.² The speech is a model of moderation and good feeling.

He suffered much under this calumny, but his regret was free from any touch of morbid exaggeration ; he went on his way as if nothing had happened, speaking as usual, and never driven one hair's-breadth towards reaction. He could even see an ironical side to the campaign against him. He writes

¹ *Actes des Apôtres*, no. 91 ; *Lettre aux Commettans du comte de Mirabeau* (n. p., n. d.), 80 pp., pp. 23-4, note (the date from internal evidence) ; *L'Épigamie des Brigands*. Preface, iv. (Worms, 1792, 78 pp.)

² 31 July, *Courrier de Provence*, no. 21, pp. 41-2.

to his mother in January, that his “ position ” “ gets better and better ; whatever I lose by my negligence [he means indifference]—and I really owe to it that I have done much better than I otherwise could—I gain by the clamours of my enemies, who have succeeded in giving me a celebrity and a standing far superior to any that I should have deserved for my work.”¹

¹ Draft of letter, dated Paris, 2 Jan. 1789, an error for 1790. *A.N.* W. 13. 229.

CHAPTER VIII

BARNAVE'S FRIENDS

UP to this time the leaders of the popular party had acted in concert, and one and all had acclaimed the Revolution in Paris ; but as soon as the common danger ceased to threaten them divisions appeared. Barnave had always been more revolutionary than Mounier, and Mounier's ardour was cooling. Inevitably, and much to Barnave's sorrow, they drifted further and further apart. He writes a little later to a friend in Dauphiné :

" I should find it hard to express to you the pain I have long been feeling at finding myself of a different opinion from Mounier on most great questions. The division of opinions in our deputation is one of the things which most troubles the satisfaction I should feel in operations, some of which I believe to have been hasty and precipitate, but almost all of which, it cannot be contested, are consonant with the universal wish of the nation." ¹

From the first he had been on friendly terms both with Lafayette and with his bosom friend, the marquis de Latour-Maubourg, as also with their ally, the duc de la Rochefoucauld, an older man of high position, whose shining virtues gained him the respect of all parties. Lafayette was intimate with Duport, and as Barnave began to leave Mounier behind, so Duport left Lafayette. Duport was drawn to Barnave, and both were drawn to another friend of Lafayette's, Alexandre de Lameth, and through him to his brother Charles.² In these three young men Barnave found the friends with whom his name is inseparably linked. He writes :

¹ Undated draft of letter ; *A. N. W.* 13. There is a foolish contemporary story, which shows an entire ignorance of Barnave's character, that when reproached with deserting Mounier, he said : " If I leave Mounier it is because I have my fortune to make," or, " M. Mounier, your reputation is made ; I have mine to make." Another version is that he could not brook being called " Mounier's aide de camp."

² Lafayette, ii. 369.

"After two or three months' trial, my friendships were fixed and have never since changed. They united me with men full of defects, but of great honesty, fine character, and great courage. Those who followed the stream of prejudice have added these friendships to the number of my crimes. Perhaps the observant will judge that men, who were placed during three years at the centre of the most important affairs, and saw a thousand coalitions form and dissolve, without knowing one single instant of misunderstanding among themselves, deserve at least to be heard before they are condemned." ¹

Adrien Duport,² deputy of the Nobles of Paris, left his mark on the Revolution in many ways, notably in the establishment of trial by jury.

Born on Feb. 5th, 1759, he was the son of a Councillor of the Paris Parlement, and only technically noble. At the age of nineteen, and of course through family interest, he became a Councillor himself, thus furnishing a striking example of the abuses which flourished under the Ancien Régime, for more than one rule was broken by his appointment. But early and unmerited preferment did not spoil him, and he cultivated talents which soon made him an ornament to his post. He was a student, and his knowledge of the laws of other countries was wide and fruitful. He was a seeker after truth, and Mesmer had been proud to claim him as one of his distinguished disciples. Above all he was a lover of liberty, and one of the men who did most in Paris to bring about the Revolution. At his house in the Marais met that "Constitutional Club" to which Lafayette, La Rochefoucauld, and, for a short time, Mirabeau belonged, and here it was agreed that its noble members, however anxious to join the Tiers-état, should, from motives of policy, seek election by their own Order.³

Duport, a brilliant talker, large-hearted and genial, who

¹ *Introduction*, 101.

² He signs himself du Port. He started as Duport de Prélaville, but dropped the suffix, and was one of the first men in France to use his Christian name.

³ Comte de Ségur, *Mémoires*, ii. 66 (3 vols., Paris, 1827); cf. *Notice sur la vie de Sieyès*, 19 (en Suisse, an III); Lafayette, ii. 360, iv. 4; Montigny's *Mirabeau*, v. 198-9.

made and kept friends among men of all parties, was a small, bright-eyed, alert-looking man, with a pale face. His constitution was delicate¹—he died of lung disease before he was forty—but his energy was untiring, his plans and expedients endless. He was well-off, and married to a wife of whom we hear very little except that by her sagacity and promptitude she saved his life in 1792.

In the Paris Parlement he was a power. "It is time, gentlemen, that you should know that citizens alone have rights and that magistrates have only duties," he said once to his fellow judges. In the interval between the Bed of Justice and the exile of the Parlement, in 1787, he procured the impeachment of Calonne; and Loménie de Brienne called him "the most untameable of magistrates." The Revolution once started, Duport was determined, as he said, to "plough deep",—an expression which alarmed Lafayette, who began to think him dangerous,—and all his abilities were devoted to this end. Barnave thought that Duport and Siéyes were the only two deputies who showed "the creative spirit"; but none but those who followed Duport's work in the Assembly appreciated his powers and his importance, and Siéyes has usurped in history the glory that he should at least have shared with Duport. Duport never struck the public imagination, and one gains no glimpses of his personality through the abuse that was showered on him in innumerable journals and pamphlets. The effect of his profound and original speeches was marred by a hoarse and toneless voice, and by a style which tended to be prolix and slightly involved often enough to enable the aristocrats to speak with some plausibility of his "chatter", and to contrast him with Barnave, who "said everything well."²

Duport's character was complex and he had two distinct sides. On one he was the "intriguer", as it was then called, we should now say "wire-puller"; on the other he was the enthusiast. His "intrigues" consisted chiefly of negotiations

¹ In the *Actes des Apôtres* he is called "le faible Duport."

² Lafayette, iv. 196, ii. 369, 370; G. M. Sallier, *Annales françaises*, 92 (Paris, 1813). Barnave, *Œuvres*, ii. 65 and errata, end of vol. iv; Lacretelle, *Histoire de France*, vii. 298; Montjoye, loc. cit., pt. ii. 101.

with other leaders, and of plans for concerted action, legitimate and necessary enough. These were shared in and conducted by Alexandre Lameth, who early mastered the science of parliamentary tactics as it then existed, and was considered an even more dangerous "intriguer" than Duport. Most of the other "intrigues" with which they were credited were purely imaginary. In days when every riot was supposed to have been paid for and engineered by some one, Duport and the Lameths, and sometimes Barnave as their friend, were accused of raising disturbances in Paris and profiting by them to carry their measures; the truth being that they tried to stop discontent by redressing the grievances which caused it, rather than by repression.

But apart from all this there are certain indications that Duport worked in secret, not for himself but for the principles he wished to spread; and his subsequent conduct forbids us to dismiss the idea as impossible. The historian Droz, for instance, states from oral tradition, that Duport's indiscretion revealed the fact that it was he who, unknown to his friends, was the real author of the famous false alarm of "the brigands", flung broadcast through France by panic-stricken messengers just after the fall of the Bastille. His object, purely patriotic, was to hasten the arming of the nation by frightening the country into self-defence.¹ Oral tradition is a dangerous guide, but a remark of Barnave's shows that he was aware of unexplored regions in Duport. On Oct. 5th, when the Paris mob was already marching on Versailles, Duport and Pétion, in the Assembly, were denouncing the banquet of the Body-guards which led to the rising. "We did not know in the Assembly of the movement which was taking place in Paris," says Barnave; "I have never doubted that, like the rest, these two who denounced knew nothing about it."² These are strange words for a man to use of his intimate friend.

Duport's other side survives in his speeches, and we think it would be impossible to study them without conceiving a heartfelt admiration for their author. One of his colleagues,

¹ J. Droz, *Histoire du règne de Louis XVI*, ii. 375.

² *Introduction*, 116.

Toulangeon, says that Duport would have founded a religious sect if he had lived two centuries earlier.¹ It would not have been a persecuting sect, for his was one of those rare natures in which a passion for mercy goes hand in hand with a passion for justice, and the thought of the Constituent Assembly reaches perhaps its highest level in his great speech in favour of the abolition of capital punishment. It is only through his speeches that we can now form any idea of what this man with whom Barnave was associated was like, and for this reason we will give one or two passages from the speech in question.

“Let us seek elsewhere [than the penal code] for the means of repressing crime. I shall never cease to repeat this truth, which is apparently despised because it is too simple; the first of these means and the most efficacious is justice, the mildness of the laws, the probity of the Government.

“The second is in local institutions, established to preserve men from the despair caused by extreme poverty, which is the ordinary source of all crimes. I am not afraid of saying that this apparatus of punishment, these laws, these tribunals, all these remedies applied to the effects, are as nothing beside the remedies which go to the source of the evil. Give men work, give help to those who cannot work, and you will have destroyed the principal causes, the most ordinary occasions, and I might almost say, the excuses for all crimes.

“You have rightly regarded the establishment of a penal code as one of your principal duties; but I venture to declare to you that three-quarters of this code will be found in the report which your Mendicity Committee has to lay before you.”

Again: “Do you believe that I am speaking to save a murderer? Do you believe that I do not think the murderer deserves death? Yes; without doubt he deserves death. But if I do not award him death, it is that I may teach others, by my example, to respect the life of man.”

And again, arguing against the substitution of life sentences for the death penalty: “It seemed to us that to eradicate hope in a man is to destroy in him the principle of life itself . . . It is to annihilate a man; it would be more humane to let

¹ *Histoire de France depuis la Révolution de 1789*, i. 109.

him perish. Society, I venture to say, has not the power of inflicting such complete degradation of self on an individual ; and besides, reason and justice are equally against it, for we should never despair of the amendment of a guilty man ; his correction is even one of the objects of his punishment, and it would no longer be possible if the man were condemned to an eternal torment." ¹

After reading thoughts like these one can understand why Camille Desmoulins spoke of Duport's " beautiful soul ", and why Lafayette, when Duport had withdrawn his friendship hastily and unkindly, wrote with a pathetic regret of " the two years when I thought that Duport loved me." ²

Nearer to Barnave's heart even than Duport stood the Lameths, three brothers, in whom advanced opinions were coupled with all the graces which high breeding and the air of courts can bestow. They came of an ancient and noble family of Picardy, which dated back to the Crusades, and took its name, sometimes spelt Lamet, from a place in the Low Countries. ³ Their father, marquis and soldier, had died young in the wars, leaving his widow, a sister of the maréchal de Broglie, to bring up a family on straitened means. The Court helped her with a gift of sixty thousand livres—which Charles Lameth afterwards voluntarily paid back into the treasury ⁴—and gave commissions to her four sons. The eldest of them, Augustin, the marquis, took no part in public affairs ; the three others, comte Théodore (b. June 24th, 1756), comte Charles (b. Oct. 5th, 1757), and Alexandre, the chevalier de Lameth (b. Oct. 28th, 1760), were ardent patriots, and ranked among the cleverest and most determined of the band of liberal nobles. All three were colonels in the army, and noted for their courage ; all three had served with distinction

¹ *Opinion sur la peine de mort, par Adrien Duport, député de Paris* (22 pp.), pp. 7-8, 13, 17 ; annexed to *Procès-verbal* of 31 May 1791 (vol. 57).

² Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la Terreur*, i. 428, in a letter ; *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 67, pp. 70-1.

³ *Dictionnaire de la Noblesse*, De la Chenaye-Desbois et Badier (reprint of 3rd edition, Paris, 1867). This did not prevent the Court party from calling them ' Jews ', a designation which their pamphleteers, in common with Marat, were fond of bestowing.

⁴ On 14 Feb. 1791 ; *Moniteur*, vii. 391.

in the American War of Independence,¹ and had imbibed there a love of liberty and equality. Théodore, a small, delicate man, was not a deputy, and spent much of his time with his regiment in the Jura, where, besides looking after his soldiers, he threw himself into administrative work, "disdaining", as some local admirers put it, "the dissipations which seem the inseparable companions of his profession."² He appears, however, to have been often in Paris. Charles was deputy of the nobles of Artois, Alexandre of those of Péronne. The three brothers were devotedly attached through life, indeed the family tie was very strong among the Lameths; the mother, who abhorred her sons' opinions, never broke with them, and the members of the family who were in Paris all lived together in the family house and did as they pleased there.

Unlike their brother, Charles and Alexandre were tall as well as slim. Charles, lively, witty and original, must have been ugly, to judge by his portraits; his nose was short, his upper lip long, but his eyes were fiery and his brow fine. First on the ramparts at the siege of Yorktown, he was shot through the knees, and would have had both legs cut off had not the surgeon thought it kinder to leave him to an almost certain death. He recovered completely, and on his return to France found himself one of the lions of the hour at Court, and was made gentleman-in-waiting to the comte d'Artois, a post he resigned in June 1789.³ The Queen was interested in him and, it is said, forwarded his marriage in 1784 with Mlle de Picot, a rich heiress, who brought him not only large estates in St. Domingo, but domestic happiness. He had one child, a daughter.

He was extremely popular, both in and outside the Assembly, in which he upheld the claims of Paris (a rôle afterwards assumed by Robespierre), and made himself the champion of the poor and the unfortunate, for whom he felt real love and sympathy. "The attachment of M. Charles Lameth for this class of the people [the lowest] cannot be suspected," says a hostile critic, "it bears every sign of an irresistible inclination." His voice

¹ So had their brother.

² *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 15, p. 63.

³ Mathieu Dumas, *Souvenirs*, i. 85-6, note; Duquesnoy, i. 108.

was powerful and high-pitched,¹ and he was a frequent speaker, whose discourses were usually full of warmth and energy, while his piquant sallies were the delight of the galleries. His style, which wanted finish, and his hard hitting, remind one of much modern oratory, and he approaches nearer than any one else in the Assembly to one's idea of a demagogue. But he was a privileged person, and his colleagues let pass in him what they would not have tolerated in any one less witty and less liked.

Alexandre, a man of great ability and the master-spirit among the brothers, was handsome, with regular features and an air of aristocratic calm. He too had enjoyed Court favour and success in society. Most of the liberal nobles had sown some wild oats, before the Revolution gave them higher ideals, and Alexandre was no exception; he had gambled, and drunk deep, and made love, like other young officers. Nevertheless he had studied as well as amused himself, he had observed men and things, he had travelled in America and Europe, including Russia, where he was received with distinction by the Empress Catherine and Potemkin. His old friend and brother officer, Dampmartin, meeting him after a lapse of years, wondered how with his "extreme taste for pleasure" he had found time to acquire such varied knowledge. There had always been a serious side to his character, as was shown by his behaviour when he was once in imminent danger of shipwreck off the American coast. The captain had given up hope, the last farewells had been said, and Alexandre "discoursed coolly" to his friend Ségur "on the immortality of the soul."²

In the Assembly his chief work was in the reorganization of the Army, and he became president of the military committee. He was a good and careful speaker, stopping just short of eloquence, but he had, unfortunately, as M. Aulard says, "the gift of writing badly."³ No hint of his strong personality comes from his pages, and his style is stiff and stilted.

¹ Oelsner, *Bruchstücke*, &c., 64-5; *Le Lendemain*, 19 Feb. 1791, p. 644, (*et alibi*).

² Dampmartin, *Événements*, i. 31, 33, and *Mémoires*, i. 32; Ségur, *Mémoires*, iii. 61, 77 and i. 413; Lacretelle, *Histoire*, vii. 298.

³ *Orateurs de l'Assemblée Constituante*, 470.

Popular though they were, Charles and Alexandre had sharp tongues, and did themselves harm by the cutting things they said. Barnave wrote in after years to Théodore, that he should like to "retrench the bitterness of their censure; either I am much mistaken, or that kind of thing does not make more friends in armies than it does in public assemblies."¹

Théodore, who was of a gentler disposition, made no enemies on his own account. It was he who loved Barnave best and most faithfully.

There was something very noble, very generous, about the Lameths. Théodore in his old age astonished a younger generation by his indifference to money and comfort. Charles, when the peasants burnt his châteaux, cried: "I am so far from complaining, that I love the people a little better for it than I did before!" "It is perhaps my own fault that I have never been able to hate," he said to the Chamber of Deputies in 1832. Alexandre, in his *History of the Constituent Assembly*, speaks contemptuously of the modern appetite for anecdotes and scandal which it lay in his power to gratify, saying simply: "such a success would not suit my character," and though he had been cruelly and constantly vilified, he pays off no scores and always writes kindly.²

The outward characteristics of the four friends who were deputies were maliciously but neatly summed up thus: "the stolid look of one, the child-like look of another, the hopelessly pedantic tone of a third, the young gentlemanly address of a fourth."³ (Alexandre, Barnave, Duport, Charles.)

Duport, Barnave and Alexandre were called the Triumvirate, and there is a well-known saying: "Duport thinks it, Barnave says it, and Lameth does it." In so far as this refers to the

¹ A. N. W. 13. 14. 12 May [1792].

² Beugnot in *Journal des Débats politiques*, 13 Nov. 1854; *Point du Jour*, vii. 108 (18 Feb. 1790); *Journal des Débats politiques*, 4 Feb. 1832; A. Lameth, i. Avertissement, p. 1.

³ Dusaulchoy, in the pirate no. 89 of *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, p. 11. One is at first inclined to suppose that "les Lameth", in contemporary writings, is meant to include Barnave and Duport. I have come to the conclusion that this is not so, that when Barnave is meant his name is added, and that the same rule usually, but not always, applies to Duport.

special talent of each it is true, but no farther. Barnave had far more force of character and a much better judgement than the other two, and on several important occasions he led them. Their connexion was very close, but he always preserved his independence. Even his worst enemies laid only a minor and subordinate share in their supposed "intrigues" to his charge.

In the wake of the Lameths came their friend, the young duc d'Aiguillon, Armand Vignerot-Duplessis-Richelieu, descended from the sister of the great Cardinal, and son of the odious and contemptible minister of Louis XV. He was an amazing contrast to his father, and as eager to renounce as his rapacious house had been to acquire. He took the same view of the depredations committed by the peasants as Charles Lameth. "If I believed that I were going to lose all my property," he said, "I should still repeat that the rights of the people must not be attacked."¹ He had a good-natured face, with blue eyes and a double chin, and although only twenty-seven he was already stout and bald. He was a capable speaker, who could make an impression.

Another intimate friend was young Laborde, rich and generous, of whose soundness in finance Barnave and the others entertained a high opinion.² There was also the Lameths' first cousin, prince Victor de Broglie, a kindly, unassuming young soldier with a charming wife, whose hospitable house was open to the patriot deputies. Another political friend, who did not belong to Barnave's circle of intimates, was the fat, odd, amusing, highly revolutionary baron de Menou, d'Aiguillon's inseparable, and a much cleverer man than the duke. All these were deputies of mark. Outside the Assembly there was the distinguished officer Mathieu Dumas, Lafayette's right hand in the organization of the National Guards, who counted the three Lameths his best friends.³

¹ *Point du Jour*, vii. 164 (22 Feb. 1790).

² Readers of M. Aulard's *Histoire politique* (p. 44) will probably put Laborde down as an atheist, because he objected to the invocation of the "Être suprême" in the preamble to the Declaration of Rights. The distinctly Christian tone of his speech on religious toleration, on 22 Aug. 1789 (*Le Hodey*, iii. 57-8), which contrasts strongly with Mirabeau's, who followed him, shows that this was not the case.

³ Madame de Chastenay, *Mémoires*, i. 103; Dumas, iii. 4.

Barnave had many friends, for he made friends wherever he went. He gave himself no airs, and such glimpses as we get of him in company are always pleasant. He had a great sympathy with aspiring young men, and two of these who came across him have recorded his kindness to them. One was Thibaudeau, afterwards a member of the Convention, who accompanied his father, a deputy, to Versailles, where he used to meet Barnave at a friend's house. Thibaudeau had oratorical ambitions and "although Barnave was only four years older than I, and I held myself at a great distance from his superiority, he gladly descended from it to talk to me and to give me encouragement." Thibaudeau when he wrote knew that it is easier for the old to descend from a pedestal than for the young. Two years later Charles Lacretelle, another budding orator, met Barnave in the Feuillants Club. Lacretelle went too far, he owns, in a speech, and "had the honour of being refuted by Barnave . . . but he did it in such flattering terms as gave me a real success" and drew the notice of the duc de Liancourt to the young speaker.¹

¹ Thibaudeau, 92 ; Lacretelle, *Dix Années*, 57.

CHAPTER IX

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT VERSAILLES

WHEN the National Assembly entered on the task of Constitution-making, its members little thought how long and how arduous that task would be. Barnave wrote to his friend Rigaud, on July 19th: "Most decidedly you must start when you get my letter, if you want to have the benefit of the interesting time that our Assembly is bound to offer. The Constitution is on the loom, eight commissaries, chosen to prepare it, promise that the result of their work shall be laid before the Assembly in less than fifteen days. These debates which will be quickly [illegible word] are surely the finest moments that the present session has to offer, and even if you were not a student of things, it is there that men will show themselves. After this work we shall have nothing but very subordinate objects to deal with, matters much less interesting, especially to the spectator; and of these we shall certainly only go through the urgent and indispensable parts this time. When you talk of coming in the month of November, you name a date which I believe myself we shall reach; but the mention of it at this moment would make most of our deputies shudder, and the Assembly will certainly be very empty, tired, and occupied with the [illegible word] of business, while now it is entering the centre of its activity."¹

And to his mother, to whom he wrote in August that he was going to do his best to help her to recover her health, impaired by sorrow and anxiety, he thus maps out his life: "When this is over I shall have done enough to be able to enjoy a quiet time in my family; it is the most urgent of my needs just now. We will arrange everything together so as to manage a pleasant and comfortable way of living, for with method and intelligence we have all that is wanted for that."²

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. 109. Versailles, 19 July 1789, draft.

² It appears from another of his letters to his mother (*A. N. W.* 13, Paris, 15 Dec. 1789), that the whole family income was under 12,000

The extremely independent life I mean to enjoy will leave me entirely to my family ; the only ambition I have is to possess the respect of the public, and that, I hope, will be well enough established to make it unnecessary for me to follow a profession. I shall give up every other career for one in national assemblies ; study, free and undisturbed, will fill all the rest of my time.”¹

The great Hall had been rearranged, and seats with backs had been raised in tiers, amphitheatre-wise, round the room. The president's chair was placed in the middle of one side ; exactly opposite him was the bar, a large enclosure to receive deputations, petitioners, &c. ; with a roomy tribune for speakers above it. The deputies, who had most of them long since given up wearing their regulation dress, soon began to give up sitting in their Orders, and it became the custom for the advanced to sit on the president's left and the reactionaries on his right, while the moderate sat in the centre of the Hall. Hence the names of Right and Left, which came into general use rather later.

Rules of procedure had been adopted on July 29th. Every fortnight a president, and with him three secretaries who held office under two presidents, were elected in the thirty Bureaux into which the Assembly was divided. The rules required the deputies to meet in these Bureaux every evening, and all questions were to be discussed there before being submitted to the General Assembly. Mounier and Malouet set great store by a mode of discussion which favoured moderate views, since in these small, private gatherings every one could speak, while the timid and the wavering were protected from the pressure of public opinion and the seduction of popular orators. But the majority understood that debate must be public, the Bureaux were soon abandoned, except for elections, and the Assembly was given over to the sway of “ the strongest lungs,” as journalists who felt that the gifts of nature had been most unequally bestowed, used to complain.

livres. Their country house belonged to them, and Barnave received some capital on his father's death. (See below, Chap. XXXV.)

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. 41. Draft, dated only ‘Versailles’, but written in answer to a letter of Madame Barnave's of 6 Aug.

The sittings opened with the reading of the *procès-verbal* of the previous day, attentively listened to and often corrected. The reading of addresses, communications and letters followed, and the announcement of those "patriotic gifts" over which the enemies of the Revolution have made so merry. After about an hour of this preliminary business the "order of the day" began;¹ much interrupted by deputations, for all France was eager to show its pride and claim its share in the wonderful, new Assembly. It must be confessed that not a few individuals were also actuated by a wish to appear in public and to see their names in print. Later on the number of deputations had to be restricted, and finally they were only received at evening sittings.

The debates were often tumultuous, and the president rang his bell in vain. This was inevitable, for after the Clergy and Nobles had joined, the Assembly not only became unwieldy in size but was divided into opposing parties, and one of these parties, the aristocrats, did not scruple to hinder the progress of the Constitution by employing all the tactics of obstruction.

Circumstances were critical; the revolution of July had brought widespread disorder in its train; "the ancient edifice fell to pieces in all its parts before the National Assembly had laid the first stones of the new," says Barnave. The power of the central Government had been so much impaired that the keeping of order depended on local authorities, and even the hopeful Barnave half thought for a short time that the old territorial divisions would have to be perpetuated, for want of a central force strong enough to hold the kingdom together should a new system of organization be attempted—an opinion he expressed in private conversation, but was careful not to mention in the Assembly.² He was not well satisfied with the way things were going in that Assembly, and writes to a friend in Grenoble shortly before Aug. 3rd:

"Our Assembly is tired, and a large portion of it is short of money; and further, the aristocrats who form part of it have gained some influence, inasmuch as their votes, their hootings, and their clappings have restored courage to the weak-kneed

¹ Campe. *Briefe aus Paris*, 193.

² *Introduction*, 102, 103-4.

party of the Commons, which had hitherto been stifled under the vigorous, dominant party. Besides, the disturbances in Paris and in some other cities of the kingdom have furnished people who are weak, or of bad faith, with an occasion to raise an outcry about anarchy and licence, and to make the Assembly forget that it is from force alone that the installation of the Constitution which it has to establish can be expected. From all this, such a state of things has arisen, that the weak-kneed and the aristocrats master us when danger is far off and we are only dealing with small things. Experience has shown us that we shall find our Assembly sound again in moments of acute crisis ; it remains to be seen what it will be like when it is debating quietly on objects of the first importance ; that is to say, what the Constitution will be.

“ If I must say so, I should not be extremely sorry if the Assembly were to be moderated by circumstances in this important work, because I am almost sure that if it had still been in its first enthusiasm, it would have gone too far. But deliberate moderation, moderation from foresight, is one thing, and moderation owing to weariness or to haste is another. It would have depended entirely on the Committee to give us the first of these ; the Committee works little, doesn’t agree, and when it might have made the Constitution itself, it is allowing it to slip from its hands, and giving it over to us.”

He goes on to say that the great ascendancy of “ the minority of the nobles ” has been a source of weakness, because the only two “ who can express themselves with great facility,” Lally and Clermont-Tonnerre, “ are absolutely devoid of principles with regard to the matter in hand ; ” whereas others, “ who unite the soundest principles with the greatest firmness, are nearly without influence because they don’t speak.”¹

The night of the 4th August must have come as a surprise to him. It resulted from a step taken by the advanced party, who felt that it would be wise, just, and conducive to good order, to give the nation a guarantee that the hated feudal system would be swept away. It was settled in the

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. 52. Undated draft. The date is settled by the reference to the “ two noble secretaries ”, who held office together till 3 Aug.

Club Breton that d'Aiguillon, who owned more feudal rights than any other subject in France, should propose a bill abolishing all privileges where taxation was concerned, and allowing all who owed feudal and seigneurial rights to buy them out at a low valuation. D'Aiguillon was ready to speak on the evening of the 4th. But the vicomte de Noailles, a man of good abilities, tall and fine-looking, though goggle-eyed, with a passion for standing in the limelight—Lamarck calls him, unkindly, "the fly on the wheel of the Revolution"—got wind of d'Aiguillon's intention. As a cadet of a noble house he had no feudal rights to sacrifice, but he saw his opportunity, managed to speak before d'Aiguillon, proposed the bill himself, and secured the praise of posterity. D'Aiguillon could only come in a bad second.¹

Every one knows the scene which followed; the spirit of self-sacrifice seized upon the Assembly, and nobles and clergy vied with each other in bringing offerings. Dauphiné, with Blacons for spokesman, was the first of the provinces to lay down its privileges; towns followed provinces, and before the excited Assembly separated, at two in the morning, it had been decreed that tithes as well as feudal and seigneurial rights should be redeemable, that all civil and military employments should be open to all citizens, that justice should be gratuitous, that no more offices should be sold, that pensions given without good reason should be discontinued; with other reforms. In the words of Duport, embodied in a decree on Aug. 6th: 'the National Assembly abolished the feudal system entirely.'

The Assembly had been unanimous at night, but with the morning came reflection, and some of those who had been carried away repented. D'Aiguillon became an object of detestation to contemporaries, better instructed than posterity, and reforms passed in concord were henceforth a cause of division. The drawing-up of the decrees gave rise to warm debates, but all the articles were retained; they were even added to, and despite strenuous resistance from Siéyes and the

¹ A. Lameth, i. 96-7; Lamarck, iii. 94, note; Duquesnoy (i. 279), says that wits called Noailles "Jean Sans-terre".

clergy, clerical tithes were abolished without compensation ;¹ a much-needed relief for the poor agriculturist. On Aug. 13th the whole Assembly, in full dress, presented the decrees to the King and heard a solemn Te Deum in the Palace chapel.

The decrees were hailed with enthusiasm throughout France, and the King had a golden opportunity of making himself popular by sanctioning them. He received the Assembly graciously, but he did nothing. A month passed, and the nation was still waiting for the royal promulgation which would give the decrees the force of law.

We must now turn to the making of the Constitution, and the parties into which it divided the Assembly ; though when parties are spoken of, it must not be imagined that the deputies were divided into hard-and-fast groups. Every honest member was proud of his independence ; and though the leaders had a small number of fairly constant adherents, such adherents were always free to withdraw their support when they ceased to agree. The votes of a large portion of the Assembly were decided by the debates.²

All parties agreed in their intention of preserving the monarchy and the reigning monarch, and the articles of the Constitution which declared the crown hereditary in the male line of the house of Bourbon, and the King's person sacred and inviolable, were voted by acclamation.³ The idea of a republic did not come into practical politics, nor did the idea of a change of Kings, both of which seemed to Barnave, at this date, so "absurd", that he did not think seriously about them. He seems to doubt the existence of a party which wished to place the duc d'Orléans on the throne.⁴ The partisans of the Duke would have liked to see him Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, but his vices made him impossible as a rival to the virtuous Louis.

There were three chief groups in the Assembly, the aristocrats, and the two which now divided the popular party,

¹ They had never been bought and sold in the market, like feudal rights. The nation undertook to provide for the expenses of worship and the salary of the clergy by other means.

² A. Lameth, i. 353-4.

³ On 15 Sept.

⁴ *Introduction*, 106, 103.

namely, the advanced section and the middle party. The aristocrats were the smallest group of the three, but down to October their votes sometimes turned the scale, so evenly were the others balanced. The aristocrats wished for as few changes as possible ; the whole of the popular party " admitted the necessity of a total reconstruction," but its members, " while agreeing on the end," " differed much as to the way and the means."¹ The advanced section, led by Le Chapelier, Duport, Barnave, and Lameth, belonged to the Club Breton and was often called the " Patriots ". The difference between such ' patriots ' and men like Talleyrand, Target, Dêmeunier, Rabaut, Camus, and others, who sat nearer the centre, was rather one of attitude than of opinion. Thouret, who had opposed the constitution of the National Assembly, was going through a short period during which he was mistrusted and misunderstood ; he soon emerged, secure in a special place of eminence. Mirabeau, with whom the advanced party often acted, had his own game to play and stood alone. So did Siéyes, who manifested his superiority, as usual, by an un concealed contempt for every one else, and came away disgusted from a visit to the Club Breton, talking of " cavern politics "—a favourite term with him.² The middle party, led by Mounier, wished to preserve something of the former power of the crown and of the aristocracy, by establishing in France a constitution closely resembling that of Great Britain, and they were determined to impose this constitution on the nation, whether the nation wished for it or no. The best criticism of this party ever made is Barnave's sentence : " M. Mounier and his partisans seemed not to have perceived that there was a revolution."³

Mounier had begun to show a complete lack of political sagacity ; he even carried his arbitrary idealism so far as to regret the abrogation of the rule which allowed every member to speak in every debate.⁴ But he was formidable on account

¹ *Introduction*, 103.

² *Étienne Dumont*, 100. Cf. Staël-Holstein, *Correspondance*, 144, " incapable of intrigues, he has made himself famous by the courage with which he has shown the Assembly his profound contempt for its deliberations and its members."

³ *Introduction*, 102.

⁴ Mounier, *Exposé*, pt. i. 29.

of his great reputation, and his views dominated in the Constitutional Committee. Three of his chief supporters belonged to it: Bergasse, Lally-Tolendal, and the comte de Clermont-Tonnerre, a young man of dignified presence, twice President in these early months; a fine and finished speaker, whose hesitating nature soon lost him the influence which his talents had gained. Malouet, with whom Mounier had made friends, was another adherent. Another was the comte de Virieu, also an orator, an enthusiastic, melancholy young man, so vehement that in the course of one hot debate he actually swore at the leaders of the extreme Left; an incident which caused a great uproar, but was overlooked by an indulgent Assembly.¹

The making of the Constitution began with a long debate on a proposal due to Lafayette, that a "Declaration of the Rights of Man" should be prefixed, after the example of the United States of America. The idea met with a good deal of opposition, some speakers being of opinion that it would be dangerous for Man to know his Rights; but the Assembly decided in the affirmative. Barnave spoke in favour of a Declaration, and described what it ought to be, in words which went home: "It must be simple, within the grasp of all minds, and it must become the national catechism."²

Many series of articles were proposed, and each article selected from among them was fully, and sometimes fiercely, discussed. On Aug. 26th the series adopted was complete—a noble "Declaration", not to be read without emotion to this day. It was very dear to the revolutionary deputies, and Mirabeau once more excited their distrust, by agreeing with those who argued that the "Declaration" ought to be postponed till the Constitution had been finished, although he had accepted a place on a committee of five for drawing up articles.

Barnave defended the Declaration warmly to correspondents in Dauphiné who thought the Assembly had wasted time over it. He writes to one:

¹ The other members of the Constitutional Committee were: the Archbishop of Bordeaux, Siéyes, Talleyrand, and Le Chapelier. For de Virieu, see Le Hodey, iii. 367, cf. Montlosier, *Mémoires*, 5.

² 1 Aug., *Point du Jour*, ii. 6.

"The advantage of simplifying and shortening subsequent work has resulted from the Declaration of Rights. You would be convinced of this truth if you knew the actual state of our Assembly; the clergy and nobles have gained such an ascendancy there, that if the impetus had not been given, if principles had not been laid down, one could not answer for anything. The decrees of Aug. 4th, (I will not dispute that some of them are excessive or precipitate,) and the Declaration of Rights, are the two pivots of our liberty. This liberty has undoubtedly cost us dear enough, it has been accompanied by enough misfortunes, especially in our province,¹ to have made it incumbent on us to take every precaution to secure it. To lose, apparently, a little time, to be hasty in some of our work—these are not mistakes for which any one can seriously reproach us, situated as we are. You know by experience how necessary it is to seize the right moment in times of crisis, and how one finds men against one when one is working for their freedom."²

It was precisely as "a guide to legislation"—so Barnave calls it elsewhere³—that the opponents of the Declaration disliked it.

The Constitutional Committee did not report till Aug. 31st, but their views became known early in the month, when Mounier published a kind of manifesto in the shape of a tract, in which he declared for two chambers, each with a veto on the other, while the King was to have a veto on both, and the right to dissolve the chamber of representatives. Mounier's plan contained no feasible provision for revising the Constitution.⁴

The conduct of the privileged orders had led Barnave to alter his views about a second chamber, and there were many in like case. "Even those," he writes, "and there were

¹ He alludes to château-burning, &c., in Dauphiné, as well as to the day of Tiles.

² A. N. W. 13. 24. Draft, dated Versailles, 5 Sept. 1789.

³ A. N. W. 12. 34. Draft, dated Versailles, 27 Aug. To his old tutor.

⁴ His so-called "provisions" took a form which made the slightest alteration almost impossible. *Considérations sur les Gouvernements et principalement sur celui qui convient à la France.* Par M. Mounier. Versailles (and Paris), 1789. See *Procès-verbal*, iii.

a considerable number of them, who had thought enough about this question not to reject lightly an institution which the wisest nations had adopted, believed that in our position it was absolutely inevitable that we should try a single chamber. Not only had the remains of our feudal aristocracy just been set aside and, so to say, pulverized by a great revolution, but even if they had been entire, their nature seemed to preclude their immediate return as elements of a free constitution. While it was impossible to organize a second chamber reasonably with such elements, it was no less equally impossible to make one which would not serve as a refuge for them ; any second chamber, whatever name it was given, whatever qualifications were fixed upon for those who composed it, would always, in reality, be a chamber of the nobles, and would perpetuate aristocracy." He adds : " If bicameralism is considered the only solid and reasonable form of organizing the representation of the people in a large country, it will be far more surely reached if it is considered as the termination of, and the remedy for, the inevitable shocks of the Revolution," than if it is adopted in the beginning. " The instinct of equality " will reject it at first, whereas, if it is only introduced later, " experience and the love of order may establish it when equality has no longer the same reason to fear it." ¹

Where there is a single chamber there must be some check upon it, or it is despotic. In Barnave's opinion this check could be provided by the King's power of veto, and the exact nature of the veto became of great importance. It must be observed, that though the framers of the Constitution intended the King to govern entirely through ministers, no idea of making the authority of the ministers dependent on the support of the legislature, as well as on the will of the King, was entertained. The executive power stood apart from and independent of the legislature ; the ministers formed no link between the two, as they do in the modern system, and every difference of opinion between the two powers took the form of a direct clash between the King and the representatives of the people. Barnave believed that violent collisions would

¹ *Introduction*, III, 113.

be avoided, and the stability of the throne promoted, by the adoption of the limited, or suspensory, veto, a provision which gave the King power to suspend a law for a time. It compelled a reconsideration of the vetoed law, and an appeal from the legislature to the people, at the elections; at the same time the people were sure that the national will must ultimately prevail.¹

These opinions were shared by the leaders of the advanced party, who were, however, more than doubtful of being able to carry them in the Assembly. They had not yet gauged the temper of the nation, and as they wished above all to avoid splitting the party of progress, they judged it wisest to try to come to terms with Mounier. Barnave was naturally conciliatory,² Duport and Lameth loved a negotiation, and far from being the "factionous" firebrands they are represented, they were willing to risk popularity and to make what may seem excessive sacrifices for the sake of unity.

Our chief authority for the conferences which followed is Mounier, who is palpably one-sided. Three meetings between Mounier and "several deputies" took place at Lafayette's house, and one at the house of Jefferson, then American envoy. Lafayette, who was strong for two chambers but against the absolute veto, acted as mediator. A coalition was proposed, and the other deputies tried to convince Mounier that insistence on the unpopular absolute veto might lead to civil war; Mounier was intractable. They offered finally to agree to the absolute veto and to two chambers, if Mounier would give up the King's right to dissolve the chamber of representatives, would allow the second chamber only a suspensory veto, and would admit periodical national Conventions for the revision of the Constitution; feeling certain that through such revision they would obtain all they wished for, in the course of time.³

¹ See his speech of 2 Sept. 1789; *Point du Jour*, ii. 284-5, and *Courrier de Provence*, no. 36, pp. 17-20.

² Droz (ii. 440-1), who does not give his authority, says that he pressed Duport and Lameth to come to an understanding with Mounier.

³ Mounier, *Exposé*, pt. i. 40-2. The Conventions were to have no powers except for revising the Constitution; Mounier misunderstood this, and regarded them as Constituent Assemblies. Lafayette, iv. 201 and note (3).

Mounier represents himself as immovable, in which he is clearly incorrect, for had he refused to negotiate, the conferences must have come to an end.

Jefferson, a sympathetic observer of the Revolution and well acquainted with its leaders, tells a rather different story. The American, whose table was renowned, received a note from Lafayette one morning, in which he invited himself and six or eight friends to dinner that day. The obliging Jefferson received the party, which consisted of Lafayette, Latour-Maubourg, Mounier, Barnave, Duport, Alexandre Lameth, Blacons, and d'Agoult, hospitably, and "the cloth being removed and wine set upon the table," "the Marquis" opened the conference. The guests talked from four o'clock till ten, with "a coolness and candour of argument unusual in the conflicts of political discussion," and enchanted Jefferson with their "logical reasoning and chaste eloquence, disfigured by no gaudy tinsel of rhetoric and declamation." He says distinctly that "mutual sacrifices" were made and an understanding arrived at.¹

Nevertheless, at another conference at Versailles, on Aug. 29th, Mounier refused to sign the plan of agreement offered him. The others then informed him, so he says, that they should do all in their power to limit the King's prerogative to a suspensory veto, and that they meant to enlighten public opinion on the subject, both in Paris, to which they were going that same evening, and in "a large Committee" at Versailles. He has the grace to add that he believes their only object was to influence opinion in favour of the suspensory veto and not to terrify its opponents, and that they did not intend to get the question taken up by the Paris mob.² The word *veto* had, however, struck the public imagination; anonymous writers in Paris sent threatening letters to deputies, and tumultuous meetings were held in the Palais Royal, on

¹ *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, i. 93, 104-5, from a memoir written in 1821. He speaks of the conference and the agreement in a letter of 20 Sept. 1789 (iii. 116-7).

² *Exposé*, pt. i. 43; cf. on the conferences, Lafayette, ii. 298, and iv. 200. Ferrières, *Mémoires*, i. 221, merely repeats Mounier. Ill-informed as usual about the popular leaders, he brings Mirabeau in and omits Barnave.

Aug. 30th and 31st, at which the crowd passed resolutions against the veto, and for the instant dismissal of members of the Assembly whose opinions did not please; and talked of marching on Versailles.¹

Intimidation produced no effect, and on the 31st Lally and Mounier reported for the Constitutional Committee, developing their plan on the exact lines already laid down.

The veto was discussed first. The debate was like a series of lectures, for most of the orators read papers prepared beforehand, in which they "answered everything except what had been said." Barnave's speech, clear, simple, and adapted to the moment of speaking, must have been an oasis in the series. Mirabeau read a telling discourse, in favour of an absolute veto, though he thought it wise to veil the fact from the public in a certain amount of ambiguity.² Siéyes was for no veto at all.

The Government, perhaps alarmed by the public demonstrations, resolved to make a bid for popularity by declaring for the suspensory veto. Here again Barnave appears as a conciliator, for the draft of a note, among his papers, shows that Necker consulted him, through Madame de Staël, on the views of the popular party. "M. Barnave has the honour of informing the Swedish Ambassadors, that if to-morrow's step is to be successful, it is very important that the letter which is to be read should explain that the King does not think he is to make use of his right of suspension relatively to the decrees of the present Assembly, but only on the laws which may be proposed by succeeding Assemblies. The interest which a part of the Assembly takes in the decrees of the 4th August might be a great obstacle to the success of the proposal, if any doubt were allowed to remain on this point. Madame the Ambassadors will forgive M. Barnave for occupying her with interests of this nature so late, and while making

¹ Bailly, ii. 326, &c. No evidence connecting the popular leaders with these disturbances has been offered in support of accusations that they fomented them.

² *Courrier de Provence*, no. 39, pp. 1-2. Dumont's story that Mirabeau had not read this speech, written for him, and got into difficulties when delivering it, is not borne out by the effect it had on the Assembly. For Barnave's speech see p. 136, note 1.

what use she thinks best of this information, she will be kind enough not to leave the note about on the chimney-piece.”¹

On Sept. 11th Necker sent the report on the veto which he had laid before the King's Council to the president, with a note which stated that he was authorized to communicate it; but Barnave's advice had not been taken, and the note said nothing more. It was known that Necker had reported in favour of a suspensory veto, and the partisans of the absolute veto persuaded the Assembly not to hear his report, on the ground that decisions ought not to be influenced by the ministers. Yet the suspensory veto was decreed by a majority of over three hundred.² A single chamber had already been decreed on the 10th, and the Constitutional Committee, twice beaten, resigned. A new Committee was elected on the 15th.³

The battle with the first Committee was hardly over, when the Assembly engaged in a new battle with the Government respecting the decrees of the 4th August. The King had done nothing, and in order to compel him to move, the Assembly resolved, on Sept. 12th, to send the decrees to him for his “sanction”. What “sanction” exactly meant was left vague. The majority of the Assembly believed that the Constitution was not to be subjected to the King's veto,⁴ but the point had not been definitely settled; moreover, the decrees in question had not been passed as part of the Constitution. The advanced party decided that the matter must be cleared up, and on Sept. 14th Barnave asked for leave to interrupt the debate, and moved, in his persuasive way, that the ‘order of the day’ should be suspended, until it had been decided

¹ *A. N. W.* 12. 14. Undated. Printed by M. de Beylié, loc. cit., 296. He also prints Madame de Staël's undated note (*A. N. W.* 12) which probably refers to the same matter. It is addressed to Barnave at the Lameths' house in Paris, but deputies were often in Paris. She begs him to come and see her at 11 a.m. on a matter very important to her and to tell “no one” of her note. “To have said this is enough to make me certain that it will remain secret.”

² Le Hodey, iii. 399.

³ Thouret, Siéyes, Target, Talleyrand, Dêmeunier, Rabaut, Le Chapelier. Tronchet was elected, but refused. *Procès-verbal*, no. 75, p. 1, vol. iv.

⁴ Duquesnoy, i. 337-8.

whether the decrees of the 4th August were to be simply 'sanctioned', or whether the King could exercise his veto upon them. They were, he said, unlike ordinary laws, because they were made by a Constituent Assembly and concerned the Constitution, and he did not think that they ought to be subjected to the veto.¹

The debate was long; Mirabeau supported Barnave, the Right resisted furiously. Barnave altered his motion twice, in accordance with suggestions, but his opponents would not allow it to be put to the vote, and when it came on again next day the 'patriots' found that the best thing they could do was to get it adjourned, and a new 'order of the day', which postponed discussion on the King's prerogatives, substituted for the old.² Consequently the decrees were taken to the King for "sanction", as had been originally voted.

Louis, relying on the support of the large party in the Assembly which was more or less antagonistic to them, replied (Sept. 18th) with a long criticism of the articles and a promise that he would sanction most of them when they were drawn up as laws. The 'patriots' were indignant. 'Sanction in this case can only mean a simple promulgation' said Le Chapelier, and he demanded that the word should be defined, and the decrees taken back to the King. The moderate party was strong enough to prevent this, and things looked so black for the 'patriots' that they acclaimed a desperate motion of Volney, for the election of a new Assembly as soon as a few specified questions had been determined. All parties hoped to find their advantage in such a measure, and the motion nearly passed on the spot. But the morning brought better counsels, the Assembly swung round, and the decrees were sent to the King for "promulgation", with a respectful assurance that the Assembly would take his remarks into consideration.³ The Government thought it best to give way, and the King replied, on the 20th, that though he could only

¹ Le Hodey, iii. 426-7; Gorsas, iii. 269-70.

² Le Hodey, iii. 445-8, &c. The change in the 'order of the day' was an intimation to the King that the Assembly would not discuss his prerogatives till the decrees were sanctioned (*Courrier de Provence*, no. 42, p. 1).

³ Le Hodey, iv. 40, &c., and 60, &c.

"promulgate" definite laws, he would order the "publication" of the decrees throughout the kingdom, which came to the same thing.

But the King was only temporizing, and the Government was once more about to resort to force. It was clear to the Court that the hands of the advanced party were strengthened by the state of feeling in Paris. Bread was scarce there, starvation perpetually looming twenty-four hours off, and the city, always in a potential condition of ferment, watched the Assembly with suspicious eyes and murmured that the King ought to come and live in his capital. Now if enough soldiers were brought to Versailles, the Assembly would be delivered from the pressure of Paris, and a governmental majority secured. The general belief of the time was, that the Court intended further to carry the King off to Metz and to dissolve the Assembly.

By a clever manœuvre the Versailles municipality was persuaded to ask for troops, and the Flanders Regiment, on whose fidelity the Court thought it could rely, was sent for, ostensibly to protect King and Assembly from the threatened irruption of Paris. The news spread consternation in Paris, and there was more talk among the people of marching to Versailles. Bailly wrote to warn Saint-Priest, Minister of the Interior, of the danger ;¹ the Paris Commune sent two deputies to him with the same object ; all to no purpose. Barnave also did his best to avert disaster. "Some of the factious of the Assembly did not fail to meddle too," writes Saint-Priest ; "Messrs. Alexandre Lameth and Barnave came to speak to me about it, to get me to ask the King to rescind the order summoning this regiment of the line. I replied to them in a way calculated to take all hope of it from them."²

The Flanders regiment arrived on the afternoon of the 23rd, and as the soldiers marched up the avenue de Paris the deputies strolled about under the trees watching their passage. Barnave was walking with Duport and Laborde ; the three stopped to

¹ Bailly, ii. 379-82.

² *Abrégé des circonstances du départ de Louis XVI pour Paris le 6 Octobre 1789, par M. de Saint-Priest.* Printed for the first time by the editors of Madame Campan, ii. 284, &c., pp. 286-7.

speak to Mounier, Malouet, and Lally, and made, as was natural, some strong remarks about impending evil. Malouet at one time interpreted the words they used as showing their knowledge of a conspiracy, though he could not remember what the words were !¹

The events of the next ten days have often been related : the cajoleries of the Court ; the Queen's imprudence at the banquet in the Opera-House, given by the Body-guards to the Flanders regiment ; the extravagant price paid for that banquet in a time of dearth ;² the tipsy demonstration after the banquet, out of doors, in the eyes of Versailles ; the Queen's words, " I was enchanted with Thursday " ; the second banquet ; the insults, real and imaginary, to the national cockade ; the rumours of plots and counter-revolutions. For the second time in three months the manœuvres of the Court goaded Paris into fury.

Meanwhile the Assembly had embarked on another struggle with the King. The advanced party had long distrusted Necker, and they had now found out that he was a poor financier. " He made the finances depend on credit, and credit on the moral character of the minister," says Barnave, to whom Necker's parade of personal virtue for political purposes was specially distasteful.³ Necker had already wrung a consent to two loans from the Assembly, and both had failed ; the deficit was larger than in May, and the country was on the verge of bankruptcy. He now laid before the Assembly a plan for bringing the finances into order, his chief expedient being the imposition of an emergency tax, called the " Patriotic Contribution ", to which every one, workmen excepted, was to contribute a fourth of his income for 1789, the payment to be spread over three years.

Something had to be done, and the tax was supported not only by Necker's admirers but by men who were hostile to him,

¹ *Procédure criminelle instruite au Châtelet*, i. 167-8, deposition of Malouet. Malouet's memoirs show that he did not continue to hold this opinion.

² Declaration of Lecointre, *Pièces justificatives du Rapport de la Procédure du Châtelet*, p. 10. (*Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée Nationale*, vol. 32.)

³ *Introduction*, 87 ; cf. *Œuvres*, ii. 68.

Mirabeau, Le Chapelier, Barnave and his friends, who were all agreed on the paramount importance of ensuring the solvency of the country and upholding its credit. By their influence the resolution for adopting the measure was so worded, that the Assembly disclaimed responsibility and laid it on Necker's shoulders.¹ Yet still the majority hesitated, and it was Mirabeau's speech on the horrors of national bankruptcy, perhaps the greatest he ever made, which carried the day.

The deputies had been forbidden by their mandates to grant loans or taxes, except on urgent necessity, before the bases of the Constitution were fixed. Once set the finances straight, and the best means of securing the establishment of a constitution would be lost, as Duport reminded them in so many words. Therefore when Necker's plan came before them, on Oct. 1st, for definite adoption, they determined, before voting it, to put pressure on the King, and to obtain his "acceptance" of the constitutional articles already voted and of the Declaration of Rights. The Right endeavoured to get the question adjourned by raising the old difficulty as to whether these measures must not be submitted to the King for his "sanction", but Barnave cleared the matter up in a few words. The necessity of the King's sanction, he said, is only established by the Constitution, it cannot therefore be refused to the Constitution by virtue of which it exists.² The decrees were taken to the King on Oct. 2nd for his "acceptance", and henceforth in parliamentary language "acceptance" meant that the King had not the option of refusing.

Barnave replies to some criticisms of what the Assembly had been doing, in a letter of Oct. 4th :

"If you could see with your own eyes that the ministry, M. Necker not excepted, and the majority of our Assembly have never wanted a constitution ; that they have never had the upper hand for a moment without trying, with incredible bad faith, to overthrow everything to which they had appeared to agree ; that they are in relation with nearly every one in authority throughout the kingdom ; that since the decrees

¹ Duquesnoy, i. 368-9.

² Duport, on 1 Oct., Le Hodey, iv. 330 ; Barnave, 1 Oct., *Journal de Paris*, 3 Oct. 1264 and Bailly, iii. 54.

of the 4th of August nearly the whole governing part of the nation has become our enemy and the enemy of liberty ; that under these circumstances, to restore much force to the old order of things¹ would almost certainly have been to re-establish it and to give it the means of annihilating liberty almost without a fight, since it would have had the Government on its side and the majority of our Assembly, who would be ready to declare themselves as soon as fear, or the will of the nation strongly expressed, no longer restrained them ; if you had reflected that we are not in a natural state, where movement is free and the will has the power of choosing out whatever is most advantageous, but in a constrained and forced state, obliged to support the immense weight of contrary forces ever ready to crush us, and that in order to get the Constitution adopted by a government and a large part of the nation which does not want it, this Constitution had to be necessary to them as the means of drawing them out of a worse state—you would have felt ”—here the fragment breaks off.²

Barnave misjudged the feelings of the majority of the Assembly. But its policy still appeared undecided, and the moderate party had once more triumphed, in the election of Mounier to the presidency on Sept. 28th.

¹ As was done in the plan of the first Constitutional Committee.

² *A. N. W.* 12. Draft, dated 4 Oct. 1789. M. Mathiez, who prints this letter in his ‘ *Étude critique sur les Journées des 5 et 6 octobre 1789* ’, *Revue Historique*, vol. 68 (1898), pp. 272–3, assumes that the letter refers to the disturbances in Paris and the coming insurrection. I submit that it is clearly an answer to a friend who had been criticizing the acts of the Assembly. Cf. what Barnave says in his letter of 5 Sept. (above, p. 134).

CHAPTER X

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH OF OCTOBER

THE King's answer, which was read on the morning of Oct. 5th, was in the old style, "uncertain, ambiguous, insidious." Louis "acceded to" the constitutional articles conditionally, and remarked that the Declaration of Rights was premature. The blood of the 'patriots' was up. Duport declared that the King's answer must be taken in conjunction with the late "indecent orgies," which had insulted the public distress; "if the Army had been here we should have had no adherence to the Constitution." Pétion averred that the instigators of the orgies were known, and when a noble dared him to write down and sign his denunciation, Mirabeau took up the challenge, crying that if the Assembly would pronounce that the person of the King *alone* was inviolable, he would himself give particulars and sign them. Every one understood that Mirabeau meant to denounce the Queen.¹

Having fired his broadside at the Court he started off on another tack, spoke slightly of the Declaration of Rights, had a brush with Barnave in consequence, and moved that the President should go to the King to ask him to explain his answer in a manner satisfactory to the people. After a long debate the Assembly had to decide between this motion and one of a very different character by Barère, namely that the President should demand from the King the acceptance pure and simple of the constitutional articles and the Declaration of Rights. It illustrates the even balance of parties, that Mirabeau's motion passed, but with such radical amendments as turned it, in effect, into Barère's.² A deputation of twelve,

¹ Barnave, draft letter of 6-8 Oct. 1789. *A. N. W.* 12. 29. 200. Printed by M. de Beylié, loc. cit., 300; Duport's speech, *Le Hodey*, iv. 369, &c. cf. *Point du Jour*, iii. 217, &c; Duquesnoy, i. 400.

² Barère's motion asked for the "publication" of the Declaration; the decree asked for its "acceptance". *Le Hodey*, iv. 380; Duquesnoy, i. 398-9.

of whom Barnave was one, was then named to accompany the President. This deputation never went.

Much anxiety was felt about the scarcity of bread in Paris; therefore when, about noon, a noble fresh from the capital came in with the news that a large mob, chiefly of women, was marching on Versailles, it was generally supposed, and Barnave shared the belief, that Paris was coming to ask for bread and perhaps to call the Assembly to account for failing to secure it.¹ A rumour of the approach of the mob spread through the Hall and took the shape that forty thousand men were at hand. Mirabeau went up to Mounier; "Paris is marching on us," he said, and asked him to close the sitting. Mounier refused, remarking grimly that if they were all killed, so much the better for the nation.²

The debate went on to its close, but when at 3.30³ Mounier was about to dismiss the Assembly, the women, who had already reached Versailles, were heard clamouring in the court. Twenty were admitted to the bar, where their spokesman, Maillard (afterwards notorious in the September massacres), demanded for them, "with an eloquence rather barbarous, but full of deep feeling," says Barnave: "1. That Paris should be provisioned with bread; 2. that the Body-guards should be obliged to make reparation to the patriotic cockade and to resume it; 3. that there should be no more aristocrats; 4. that liberty should be assured to the nation."⁴ The Assembly listened sympathetically, and Mounier, who behaved with great dignity, tried to reassure the Parisians, and entered into conversation with them. In the course of it they accused their Archbishop of having paid the millers not to grind corn; at which all the deputies cried out that it was impossible, Duport in particular defending his colleague warmly.⁵ In

¹ *Introduction*, 117.

² Mounier, *Appel au Tribunal de l'Opinion publique*, 302 (Londres, 1791, 351 pp.), Mounier's deposition, *Procédure criminelle instruite au Châtelet*, ii. pt. 3. 72.

³ There is considerable variation in the times given for the events; I have generally followed Mounier, who is clear, and is confirmed by other evidence.

⁴ Draft letter. *A. N. W.* 12. 200 (6-8 Oct.). Printed by M. de Beylié, loc. cit., 301.

⁵ Duquesnoy, i. 401.

order to appease the women, it was resolved that the President should go at once to the King, to represent to him "the miserable state of the city of Paris."

Mounier accordingly set out about five o'clock, with a deputation of twelve,¹ among whom was Duport. A number of women insisted on going too, and a good many deputies accompanied their President on a walk which might well prove to be dangerous. Barnave was probably one of these, for according to his own account he left the Assembly about this time.

Rain was falling heavily and the roads were deep in mud ; the wide avenue, lined by watching townsfolk, was full of groups of women, with ragged men among them here and there who carried pikes, hatchets, iron-tipped sticks, and old guns. As the deputies passed, the pike-bearers were talking of the vengeance they meant to take on the insulters of the national cockade, and their conversation first thoroughly enlightened Barnave as to the spirit in which they had come. Small detachments of Body-guards galloped by at intervals, scattering the crowd, and one of these patrols bore down on the deputies, who had to fly through the mud in all directions.² The place d'Armes was full of troops ; the regulars had been called out on the approach of the mob, and now stood ranged in front of the Palace railings, the Body-guards in the centre. The National Guard of Versailles, abandoned by its superior officers, was also drawn up in the place d'Armes ; and as the rank and file, strongly democratic, were very hostile to the Body-guards, and one collision between them had already taken place that afternoon, a skirmish might have begun at any moment.

¹ Mounier, *Appel*, 130 ; *Exposé*, pt. ii. 15. The *Procès-verbal* (no. 92, p. 29, vol. v) says that Mounier went to get the Constitution accepted ; Mounier (*Appel*, 130 and note), says that the *Procès-verbal* is wrong here. He is supported by the depositions of the deputy, Deschamps, of Maillard, and of Tergat, also by those of Duport and Blacons, who went with him, neither of them members of the first deputation (*Procédure criminelle*, i. 240, 129, 99 ; ii. 36 ; i. 184). Had Mounier gone to ask for the acceptance of the Constitution he would have taken with him the deputation appointed for the purpose. Barnave did not go, nor Menou (*Procédure criminelle*, ii. 41), who was a member. Guillotin was on both deputations. Deschamps says that many deputies accompanied the deputation to the Palace.

² *Introduction*, 117 ; Mounier, *Exposé*, pt. ii. 15-16.

Barnave saw part of the National Guard "in the greatest agitation" and tried to get something done. Alexandre Lameth was with him, and they went together to report to de Gouvernet, second in command of the National Guard, and a connexion of the Lameths. Barnave asked him to restore order among his men, and Gouvernet, a kindly but weak man, answered that he had already attempted it, but in vain. He went off, nevertheless, to try again, but with no better success. Small wonder that he failed, for he declined to take any responsibility in the absence of his colonel. The two friends had dinner in his room, and Barnave returned to the Assembly some time after six o'clock.¹

He found the Hall full of women. They had been admitted to shelter from the drenching rain in batches; and first a committee-room had been given up to them, next the galleries, and as more and more of them came, they had been allowed to enter the Hall itself. Here they sat among the deputies, pulling them about, making debate impossible and behaving as indecorously as might have been expected. The Bishop of Langres, presiding in Mounier's absence, was quite unable to keep them in order; they even tried to kiss him.²

At about eight o'clock Guillotin came back from the Palace with the announcement that the King had given orders which would ensure corn to Paris, and some of the women, and Maillard, were sent home with the good news. Still Mounier did not return, and between 9.30 and 10 the Bishop of Langres closed the sitting in despair. Most of the deputies who had stayed till then went home, but a few remained at their posts, units among the throng of men and women who had taken possession. Barnave was certainly one of these deputies, for he says: "I passed the rest of the evening partly at the Assembly and partly at the Palace."³

¹ *Introduction*, 117-18; cf. A. Lameth, i. 150. Lameth, who is inaccurate on the events of this day, says that he was on the deputation which went to the Palace. It is probable that he started with it, as I suppose Barnave did. For Gouvernet, see the depositions of Lecointre and Durup de Baleine, *Pièces justificatives du Rapport de la Procédure du Châtelet*, 15, 20, 42-5 (*Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée Nationale*, vol. 32).

² Deposition of Tergat, *Procédure criminelle*, i. 100; Duquesnoy, i. 402.

³ *Introduction*, 118.

At some time during the evening it became known that the women and their disorderly followers were only the first and least significant part of the invasion from Paris. During the day the Parisian National Guard, that is to say, orderly and respectable Paris, had been forcing Lafayette, who long resisted, to lead them to Versailles, and they were now fast approaching. The mob might have been dispersed ; all Paris in arms was not to be gainsaid.

Meanwhile up at the Palace, Mounier, having finished the Parisian affair, learnt in answer to an inquiry, that the King would receive the deputation about the Constitution at nine o'clock. It was gall and bitterness to the unhappy President to be obliged to urge an unconditional acceptance, but he was bound to the Assembly, and he felt it his duty to represent to the ministers how much better it would be if the King would accept the decrees without waiting for the deputation. The ministers begged him to stay while they conferred with the King, time went on and they were still conferring. Between nine and ten came confirmation of the news that the National Guard of Paris was near. It was a word of terror for the Court, and at ten the King wrote an unqualified acceptance of decrees and Declaration. Mounier bore it off to the Assembly at once, Duport and some of the deputation being still with him.¹

Matters changed in the Hall with Mounier's arrival. He turned a woman out of the president's chair, ordered the Assembly to be summoned by beat of drum, and announced the King's acceptance of the decrees. The women asked wistfully, "if that would mean bread for the people of Paris," and Mounier, finding that they were hungry, sent to the bakers, and had food distributed among them ; for the Assembly felt much pity for them and treated them throughout with kindness and forbearance.

Shortly before midnight the National Guard of Paris reached Versailles, and Lafayette, on his way to the Palace, came into the Assembly to assure the President that, whatever the motive of his troops in starting, their present intentions were

¹ *Exposé*, pt. ii. 16-20 ; Duport's deposition, *Procédure criminelle*, ii. 36.

perfectly loyal and peaceable. He had hardly gone when a message from the King requested the President to come to him at once, with as many deputies as he could get together. A number had arrived by this time, and all walked up to the Palace in a body, through the middle of the Parisian National Guard which now filled the avenue. But Louis, who had sent for them as a protection, had been reassured by Lafayette before their arrival, and after informing them that he had never intended to quit Versailles, and that he would never leave the National Assembly, he dismissed them with thanks. They walked back again to the Hall, and there, for the sake of doing something, held a debate on Criminal Law. The women interrupted with cries of "Bread! bread! Not so many long speeches!" but a rebuke from their idol, Mirabeau, silenced them. About 3 a.m. Lafayette came once more, to inform the President that all was now quiet, and Mounier felt that he could safely close the sitting. "I returned home," says Barnave, "after having seen the place d'Armes covered by the Parisian National Guard in the best order. I then regarded the danger as entirely over."¹

So did every one else. The Body-guard and the Versailles National Guard had again exchanged shots at eight o'clock, but this had been the only actual fighting, though blood had been shed in many scuffles. The King, to his credit, had ordered the troops not to fire, and the Flanders regiment would hardly have fired if ordered, for it had gone over to the side of the people. Guards were set on the town side of the Palace by Lafayette; the inner posts were defended by a detachment of the Body-guards; the rest of this regiment was sent off to Rambouillet during the night, to be out of the people's way. Lafayette did not go to sleep, as the aristocrats averred; he was up all night; but he did make a bad mistake in not putting a strong enough guard on the outside of the Palace.

Between five and six in the morning, the more disreputable portions of the mob, while prowling about, made their way somehow, through an unguarded gate, into the courts of the Palace. They were fired on by a party of Body-guards and

¹ *Exposé*, pt. ii. 20-5; *Introduction*, 118.

retaliated with a savage attack upon their assailants, which carried them, in pursuit up the staircase and into the apartments of the detested Queen. She had a narrow escape of her life, for the language some of the women had used about her the day before shows that the mob would have killed her if she had been found. But the attack, evidently unpremeditated, was not directed against her.¹ Things were bad enough as it was; two of the Body-guards, innocent young men, were slaughtered, and their heads, cut off in the Palace court by one Nicholas, an artist's model, were stuck on pikes and carried off to Paris early in the morning.² Lafayette and the Parisian National Guard saved the others. Only a very small portion of those who took part in the rising were connected with its crimes.

At seven or eight in the morning Barnave heard what had happened and ran to the Assembly. The sitting was not to open till eleven, and while some of the deputies gathered in the Hall, others went up to the Palace. Two of these, de Blacons and de Serent, suggested to the King that the Assembly should meet in the Salle d'Hercule in order to be near him, and as Louis approved, they came down to the Hall to summon their colleagues.³ Mounier opened the sitting by proposing to go to the King, but Mirabeau argued that it was not consistent with the dignity of the Assembly to deliberate in the King's palace, and moved that communications with him should be kept up by means of commissaries. To Mounier's chagrin the Assembly agreed with Mirabeau, and a deputation was appointed. Before it left, Barnave, who was a member, mounted the tribune to make a motion.

The Assembly, he said, has to advise the King about his removal and to debate on its own; "whether the King and the Assembly will remain here; whether they will go to Paris;

¹ This results from a study of the depositions in the *Procédure criminelle*.

² Many depositions prove this; I need only refer to the diary of Gouverneur Morris, a safe witness here (i. 175). Notwithstanding his categorical statement his editor repeats, on the same page, the common story that the heads went with the royal family.

³ *Introduction*, 118; *Exposé*, pt. ii. 28; depositions of Serent and Blacons, *Procédure criminelle*, ii. 109, i. 184.

whether they will transfer themselves elsewhere. This can only be decided by circumstances and after mature reflection, but it is certain that in any case they must not separate; the safety and peace of the realm, the unity of the public powers, and the inviolable fidelity we owe to the King, alike prescribe this to us. This resolution . . . cannot be pronounced too soon; I therefore propose to the Assembly to decide, now and here, that during the present session the King's person and the National Assembly are inseparable."¹

The resolution was passed unanimously and the deputation took it to the King. He received them with much feeling and replied that he would never separate from the Assembly.

Will it be believed?—This resolution, obviously proposed by Barnave in perfect good faith, voted by all parties, and acceptable to the King, was represented, from the first, as an underhand method of securing the transfer of the Assembly to Paris, whither the King had decided to go.²

The allegation has been often repeated, and we will quote what Barnave wrote about it in November, when Mounier published his *Exposé*: "He [Mounier] maintains that we knew of the King's determination when we declared ourselves inseparable; the point is immaterial but completely false, since it is certain that the King only made it known to the deputation which took him the resolution, of which I was one. If any one else brought this news to the Assembly, it was not only after the resolution, but after the deputation had left."³

At two o'clock the royal family started on the first of those sad journeys when their people carried them whither they would not. A large deputation from the Assembly went with them, so did the Flanders regiment, the Body-guards, the Cent-Suisses, the National Guard of Paris, who fired continually in sign of joy, and the happy, noisy, triumphant mob;

¹ *Point du Jour*, iii. 232-4. I have followed this paper, which gives the best and fullest account of the debate. Several authorities make Mirabeau propose and Barnave second the motion. This seems due to a confusion between Mirabeau's motion and Barnave's. The procès-verbal was ill-kept during these days.

² Duquesnoy (i. 411-12), speaks of it thus on 7 Oct.

³ Draft of letter, Paris, 24 Nov. 1789. *A. N. W.* 12. 16.

the women carrying branches of poplar, and sometimes cheering the Queen in a revulsion of feeling.¹

So ended what Barnave calls "this terrible movement which, but for the immense influence of M. de Lafayette on the people of Paris, and the intelligence of the Assembly, would have been *one of the most frightful* of which history has preserved the remembrance." ²

It was at first doubtful whether the King would stay in Paris; the excellent reception he met with decided him to remain there.³ But from now onwards it was the endeavour of the Court to prove in all possible ways that the King was a prisoner, whose every action was done under constraint.⁴ It ought not to be forgotten that this allegation, which ended by being true, began as a political fiction.

On the 9th Louis summoned the Assembly to follow him. They held their last sitting at Versailles on Oct. 15th, and their last act was a decree, proposed by Duport, that henceforth there should be no distinctions of dress or place among the deputies, "even on deputations and in ceremonies." ⁵

The great Hall became national property, and was sold in 1799 to a certain Dubosc, who, after failing to persuade the municipality to turn it into a corn-market, pulled it down in 1800. There is a private garden on the place where it stood.⁶

The October rising "consolidated the Revolution."⁷ Henceforth the Court could no longer dare to brave the National Assembly and ignore the voice of the people. But for a short

¹ Letter of 7 Oct. from the comte d'Estaing to the Queen, *Pièces justificatives du Rapport de la Procédure du Châtelet*, p. 62. His testimony is conclusive.

² *A. N. W.* 12. 201. Printed by M. de Beylié, loc. cit., 302. Barnave, when he wrote, was ill-informed, and believed that the Parisian National Guard had been slaughtering the Body-guards. The *Courrier français*, 8 Oct., pp. 61-2, says that 19 victims were buried in Notre-Dame on the 6th, 7 Body-guards, 6 Versailles National Guards, 5 citizens, and 1 woman.

³ See Marie-Antoinette to Mercy, 7 Oct. 1789 (*La Rocheterie, Lettres*, ii. 146); Duquesnoy, i. 421, and the King's letter of 9 Oct. (*Procès-verbal*, no. 96, pp. 3-4, vol. v.).

⁴ Hence his refusal to go hunting; Lafayette, ii. 417.

⁵ *Point du Jour*, iii. 346; *Procès-verbal*, no. 101, vol. vi.

⁶ Brette, *Histoire des édifices*, 85, note.

⁷ Malouet, ii. 5.

time the result seemed doubtful. There was reason to fear that the country would resent the violence offered to the King and would believe that King and Assembly were no longer free agents, and the Assembly had to meet at once one serious attempt to destroy its power, and within the year another attempt to discredit it.

The first danger was dissolution, through the defection of a large number of members. An outcry was raised that in Paris free speech would be impossible and the lives of unpopular deputies unsafe. Many members left Versailles in fear and disgust, and a larger exodus was planned. The fugitives were to meet together in another place, rouse the provinces, and demand the removal of the Assembly or the calling of a new one. In pursuance of this scheme Mounier, ill and unhappy, resigned the presidency on the 8th, and slipped away to Dauphiné; Bergasse retired; Lally fled to Lausanne. But no member could leave without a passport signed by president and secretaries, and Le Chapelier, acting as president, foiled the great design by calling attention on Oct. 9th to the number of passports he was being asked to sign, and requesting instructions.¹ Hitherto passports had been freely granted on demand; the Assembly was loath to curtail this privilege, and the Right enlarged on the dangers of Paris. But the 'patriots' prevailed, and it was decreed, on Mirabeau's motion, that in future no deputy should be given a passport till he had submitted his reasons for demanding it to the Assembly. After this the demand for passports ceased.

Barnave had supported Mirabeau, and Mallet du Pan, who in his weekly paper, the *Mercur de France*, was in the habit of twisting his speeches into nonsense and ferocity, reported that M. Barnave had spoken in favour of refusing passports, "although two of his colleagues, deputies of Dauphiné, were on the lists of the proscribed,"—lists supposed to be circulating in Paris. An accusation of disloyalty was unendurable, and Barnave wrote to the *Journal de Paris* one of the only two letters he ever sent to the papers on his own behalf. "However

¹ Mounier, *Appel*, 266-7; Malouet, ii. 5; *Procès-verbal*, no. 96, vol. v. Duquesnoy (i. 424) says that more than 300 passports were applied for.

well accustomed I am to see all my opinions malignantly perverted in this journal, and in all those which breathe the same spirit, and however great my indifference in this respect, I cannot let a calumny of this nature pass without protest ; ” and after giving the true version of what he had said, he took the opportunity, “ to disavow, once for all, the opinions and the expressions attributed to me by this journal, and by all those directed by the same influence.” ¹

A fresh anxiety was at hand. During the recess of provincial Estates their affairs were always managed by a commission, and the “ Intermediary Commission ” of the Estates of Dauphiné, terrified by the October rising, summoned the Estates to meet on Nov. 2nd, and called up with them the supplementary members, whose only function was to elect deputies to the National Assembly. Mounier gave this step his unqualified approval ; he was hoping that the provinces would defy Paris and was apparently ready to risk civil war. But if Mounier was a power in Dauphiné, so was Barnave. Barnave’s assurances that there was no danger heartened the patriots of Grenoble,² and Mounier’s efforts were rendered vain by a letter written to the Intermediary Commission, between Oct. 18th and 25th, in the name of the deputies of Dauphiné, who had it printed and profusely circulated in the province. Barnave was the author of this letter.³

In it the deputation expressed sympathy with the fears of the Intermediary Commission as the natural results of imperfect knowledge, but pointed out that not only could the rising be

¹ *Mercure de France*, 17 Oct. 1789 ; *Journal de Paris*, 26 Oct. 1379–80, letter dated 23 Oct. 1789. For some time after this, Mallet du Pan copied Barnave’s speeches from other papers, and put them in inverted commas. The habit of writing to the papers rapidly became as common as it is in England to-day.

² *Patriote français*, 26 Oct., letter from Grenoble of 17 Oct. There are allusions to this correspondence in Barnave’s papers.

³ Mounier, *Appel*, 270 ; *Lettre écrite à la commission intermédiaire des États de Dauphiné par les députés de cette province à l’Assemblée Nationale*. Paris, 1789, 16 pp. The date from internal evidence. There is a draft in Barnave’s hand, corrected by him in pencil, among his papers (*A. N. W.* 12. 28, *W.* 13. 24, 214, 319, 317, 318, 227). The authorship was known at the time (*Journal de Paris*, 28 Oct. 1388). Virieu, d’Agoult, and Revol refused to sign ; Pison signed because others did.

accounted for by well-known causes, but that it was certainly not hostile to the King. His person had been respected, and since his arrival in Paris the affection of the people had been strongly manifested; the Queen, too, was being treated "with all the regard due to the dignity of her rank". The action of the people of Paris was defended; "there is no doubt that they believed they were once more saving public liberty, that they believed they were preventing the King's departure in which all good citizens saw the ruin of the State. If some guilty ideas were mingled with this, if the hope of effecting by terror the removal of the King to a distance and the dissolution of the Assembly, moved some secret springs which assisted the popular ferment,¹ the purity of the intentions which inspired the mass of the people did not allow of the accomplishment of this object, or even that it should become evident." The King has remained in Paris by his own free choice; the Assembly would leave the city at once if there were any check on freedom of debate. The deputies deprecated the convocation of the Estates, as a step calculated "to complete the severance of all the ties which unite the different parts of the body politic, to give the provinces a fatal example of seeking a centre of power in themselves," and appealed to the example Dauphiné had formerly set of merging local interests in the general interests of France. After enumerating the benefits which the Revolution had already conferred, they asked: "Should they not encourage us to endure these moments of storm calmly and patiently? Should they not encourage us to make the temporary sacrifices which the public good requires at the present time?" . . . What is wanted now is "the greatest quiet, the regular payment of the taxes, and confidence in the united efforts of the King and the National Assembly."²

Late events had saddened Barnave, and he ends a long political letter, to a correspondent in Dauphiné, in a home-sick strain:

"Adieu, Sir; through all the fatigues and troubles which surround us here—and the envenomed hatred of a few persons makes me feel these particularly—I do not cease to sigh for my return to my own country. If, as I never give up hoping, all

¹ An allusion to the supposed anti-revolutionary plot. (See pp. 158-9.)

² pp. 6, 5-6, 4, 8, 11, 14, 15.

this leads us to something good, with what joy shall I find peace in my home once more, and see those among my compatriots whose esteem I may have earned.”¹

Mounier remained in Dauphiné, deaf to the entreaties of the Archbishop of Vienne, and of Lafayette, who assured him that no deputy had been treated with disrespect and that the debates were “much less troubled by the galleries” than at Versailles. He resigned his membership on Nov. 15th; he wrote political pamphlets, each more bitter than the last; he continued to encourage the opposition of the Intermediary Commission. In 1790 he exiled himself to Geneva, on the pretext that his life was not safe in Grenoble. Early in 1792 he published a book called, “Inquiry into the causes which have prevented the French from becoming free.” “Never has the longest reign of the most absolute despot ravaged the country under his government as France, in three years, has been ravaged by the National Assembly of 1789,” he wrote, and he called his last chapter, “Crimes of the authors of the Constitution against the human race.” Here he had to stop. “When the other Assemblies appear, when the scaffolds are prepared, Mounier will be silent,” says Quinet, “. . . he can reach no climax in his fury; he has outpassed Hell at the first step.”² His writings have obscured the history of the Revolution by encouraging the facile opinion which confounds the earlier and later periods and regards it as one long series of atrocities.

Barnave continued to feel kindly towards Mounier, and refused to write an answer to Mounier’s first pamphlet, the *Exposé*, which contained disagreeable observations on himself. He says to a friend that, first, as he has just been secretary to the Assembly he has not had time to write anything. “2. It was impossible to answer all that M. Mounier has said against the National Assembly without attacking his own justification, and I did not believe and still do not believe that it was for me to do this. Finally, his work has made so

¹ A. N. W. 13. 46. Part of a letter (W. 13. 238, and W. 13, no number), dated Paris, 19 Oct. 1789.

² Lanzaç de Laborie, *Mounier*, 234, 241-2; Lafayette, ii. 415, &c.; *Moniteur*, iii. 95; *Recherches sur les causes qui ont empêché les Français de devenir libres*. Geneva, 1792. 2 vols (ii. 41); Quinet, *Histoire*, i. 60.

unfavourable an impression here, even on those who had seemed most attached to the author's opinions, that to use this occasion to combat him would have shown, especially on my part, a mean and rancorous spirit which would not suit me at all.

"Although I have not much to complain of personally in his work, yet he has scattered a few insinuations in it which my conduct towards him has never authorized him to make."¹

He writes to his mother on Jan. 2nd, à propos of some troubles in Dauphiné: "Some people even say what I cannot believe, that Mounier is working to excite or to keep up this fermentation."² Some time later he had his regrets at their estrangement conveyed to Mounier, who seems to have considered this a proof of repentance, and mentions him with patronizing kindness in his last book.³

All parties were desirous that the crimes which had sullied the Revolution should be punished; therefore, on Oct. 21st, the Châtelet, the first law-court in Paris after the Parlement, was authorized to try cases of high treason until a high court was established, and the affair of the 6th October came before it. It will be convenient to speak of this investigation here.

Rumours were early rife that the October rising had been engineered in favour of the duc d'Orléans, for whom the mob had shown affection, and that Mirabeau was in the plot; and it was not long before other members of the popular party, to whose cause the rising had been so advantageous, were also named. A great many people believed in the guilt of the Duke, among them Lafayette, who moved heaven and earth to find evidence against him, and when none was forthcoming⁴ bullied the weak prince into accepting a vamped-up diplomatic mission to England.

Was there any plot, known only to a few, which helped to set a great independent movement going? If one side suspected d'Orléans, the other suspected that the enemies of the Revolu-

¹ *A. N. W.* 12. 16. Draft letter, Paris, 24 Nov. 1789.

² *A. N. W.* 13. 229. Draft letter, Paris, 2 Jan. 1789 (an error for 1790).

³ *De l'Influence, &c.*, 102.

⁴ Lafayette's own admission (*Lafayette*, ii. 358).

tion had tried to discredit it by driving it into excesses. There seems to be no shadow of proof either way. "The general causes of this catastrophe are well enough known," writes Barnave, "... I have always been in absolute ignorance as to whether a secret impulsion joined with these general causes. If I were giving now, not an account of my own conduct, but the most private history of what has come to my knowledge touching the events of the Revolution which are least understood, I could give no information about this one."¹

The Châtelet was determined to find a plot by hook or by crook, and witness after witness was examined. The inventive were encouraged, and hints dropped by idle gossip or vague suspicion were eagerly followed up, but questions which might have elicited unwelcome answers were left unasked, and hostile witnesses uncalled. Much of the evidence was pure hearsay; A. had heard B. make some definite statement; B., when called, said he had it from C., who traced his knowledge to D., who fell back on an anonymous informant. The first witness called, Peltier, editor of the *Actes des Apôtres*, was allowed to make an incriminating deposition which fills six and a half closely printed pages, and contains only three small statements made from his own knowledge. A great feature of many of the depositions was the existence of strange, purposeless 'men dressed up as women,' and recognized by their beards, whom the aristocrats and their adherents had seen, or fancied they saw, among the Paris mob. 'As well go about with a label on, as dress in petticoats without shaving,' said Marat;² but rumour had it that some of the patriot deputies, d'Aiguillon in especial, had been seen mingling with the crowd, disguised as *poissardes*, and the Châtelet welcomed the rumour. Many witnesses were, of course, perfectly truthful, and much valuable information was collected, along with much that was worthless; but, with all its ferreting, the Châtelet proved nothing.

The Châtelet had lost the public confidence by other

¹ *Introduction*, 116.

² *Ami du Peuple*, 8 Oct. 1790, p. 1. A letter from an eyewitness (Gorsas, xvii, 116, 9 Oct. 1790) suggests an explanation of this vexed question; the writer says there were no men in petticoats, but that three or four bearded *poissardes*, with hoarse voices, who can be seen any day in the Halles, went to Versailles.

proceedings, and in April it got about that the judges were using the investigation for political purposes, "putting the Revolution on its trial", as the saying went, and that some of the best-known patriot deputies were going to be implicated, Barnave among them. He knew of this at the end of April and took the matter coolly.¹ On May 17th he writes to some one at home: "You are right not to be troubled by the rumours about the proceedings of the Châtelet, which are circulated at Grenoble as they are here. My destiny, like that of many others, is bound up with the Revolution. It is not to be doubted that should it fail, I should be one of the first victims, and I think this an honour. If, as there is reason to hope, the Revolution goes through, I may have to suffer from personal resentments, but certainly not through proceedings like these, against which notoriety and the universal belief would themselves protest, if it were true that the rumours circulated have some foundation." Some say that the duc d'Orléans is the only deputy accused, and he inclines to this opinion; "but when the most violent aristocrats and all their vile creatures have been to make depositions, it is difficult to believe that they haven't used the opportunity to try and take vengeance on the men they detest most."²

Duport knew the duc d'Orléans; Barnave and the Lameths never had relations with him, either before this time or after.³ Yet at an early date the aristocrats had dubbed them all Orleanists, and in the summer of 1790 a systematic attempt was made, in a curious series of pamphlets, to connect them with the Duke and with Orleanist plots, and at the same time to exalt Lafayette and Mirabeau. Duport and the Lameths were represented as ringleaders, Barnave only filled a subordinate part. Evidence was invented, and fictitious letters were written, a favourite device of aristocrat pamphleteers and one which, when skilfully done, occasionally deceives historians

¹ *A. N. W.* 12. Draft letter, Paris, 25 April.

² *A. N. W.* 12. 46. Draft letter. Paris, 17 May 1790. Printed by M. de Beylié, loc. cit., 304-5.

³ Letter of Théodore Lameth in *Gazette Universelle*, 3 June 1792, p. 618; Barnave in his defence, *Œuvres*, ii. 390. It appears from the depositions that Duport knew the Duke.

to this day.¹ The friends treated the matter with their usual contempt for libels.

The judges of the Châtelet had delayed taking action while d'Orléans was out of their reach ; soon after his return for the Federation in July they prepared to strike. They had incriminated both him and Mirabeau, but as, by a recent decree, no writ could be issued against a deputy without leave of the Assembly, they were obliged to lay all the evidence they had accumulated before the Comité des Rapports, to which the affair had been referred, and the Assembly had it printed. The manner in which the Châtelet had discovered "these secrets full of horror," as its spokesman called them, was thus made known to the world. The abbé Maury himself owned that there was nothing to inculpate Mirabeau, and all impartial historians agree that there is no evidence which will stand against d'Orléans.

The charges against Barnave were so flimsy that even the Châtelet had not dared to demand his accusation. Two deputies insinuated a secret understanding with Mirabeau ; another recorded gravely, that when the Assembly walked to the Palace in the middle of the night he found himself between Duport and Barnave at the gate, and a man in the crowd asked them for Maury's head to play skittles with. One man had heard that Barnave, Le Chapelier, Lameth, and d'Aiguillon, "all four disguised as women," had been seen among the mob in the Palace court on the morning of the 6th ; another, that Barnave and Duport had been seen among the mob and among the troops, the same morning, "meanly dressed." Peltier had heard that Barnave and Duport had excited the people of

¹ I have found eleven such pamphlets in the British Museum ; they are, in approximate chronological order : 1. *La Cabale d'Orléans resuscitée* (F. 261). 2. *Lettre écrite par M. A. de L . . . à ses correspondants dans les différentes garnisons du Royaume* (R. 80), printed *Moniteur*, v. 319. 3. *Lettre de M. de Lacroix à son ami Charles de Lameth* (R. 80). 4. *Il faut y faire attention* (F. 444). 5. *Lettre de Charles Lameth à . . . M. Godad* (R. 80). 6. *Lettre de M. Duport à M. Charles Lameth* (R. 80). 7. *Ça ira* (F. 255). 8. *Lettre de M. Laclos à M. Forsh à Londres* (F. 255). 9. *Où nous mène donc la faction orléano-anglaise ?* (F. 256). 10. *Ce que c'est que l'histoire du Châtelet* (F. 256). 11. *Réponse à la lettre de M. Desbrais* (F. 256). I abridge titles.

Versailles against the Flanders regiment ; he had also " heard said as the certain proof of an anti-royalist cabal," that when Mme de Tessé (aunt of Mme Lafayette) reproached Barnave " about his conduct and because he traduced M. Mounier, his colleague and benefactor," he had answered : " What would you have, madam ? I have pledged myself." ¹

The Dauphinois Chabroud, a clever, thoughtful man, eminent among the legal reformers of the Assembly, was chosen to report on the affair. He acquitted himself ably, if somewhat theatrically, made merry over the ridiculous stories told, and reproved severely the many deputies of the Right who had given spiteful evidence. He spoke rather as an advocate than as a judge, but this tone was often adopted by reporters, whose function it was to submit the opinion of their committee to the Assembly for judgement. He asked the Assembly to declare that there was no reason for bringing an accusation against Mirabeau and d'Orléans.²

The tables were now turned upon the Right, who were in the habit of making political capital out of the October crimes, and though their anger was loud and furious they were completely worsted in the debate of Oct. 2nd. Mirabeau annihilated his accusers in a magnificent speech, and left the tribune amid thunders of applause. D'Orléans had purposely stayed away ; he was defended by the duc de Biron, who offered to produce a complete justification. No one ventured to answer Biron and there was a long silence. It was broken by the sturdy aristocrat Montlosier, who made an effort to obtain an adjournment, and the discussion was starting afresh when Barnave, who at this time often summed up the debates, delivered what was the general opinion of the Assembly in a few scornful sentences.³

" For fifteen days the Proceedings on which we are deliberating have been made public, they have been in our hands.

¹ *Procédure criminelle* ; depositions of Bouthillier (i. 254), Frondeville (ii. 12), Guilhermy (i. 235), deputies ; La Serre (ii. 83), Gallemand (ii. pt. 3, p. 31), Peltier (i. 14, 16). Chabroud made fun of Peltier's story (*Rapport*, pp. 12-13).

² *Rapport de la Procédure du Châtelet*, &c., par M. Charles Chabroud, 118 pp. ; delivered 30 Sept. and 1 Oct. 1790. *Procès-verbal*, vol. 32.

³ *Moniteur*, vi. 27-34.

From the moment they were known they were judged . . . All the world has seen that there was no conspiracy, except that which was attempted, really, uselessly, unpatriotically attempted, in Proceedings which have already occupied us too long." . . .

"Great horrors had been committed ; it would have been just to investigate and to punish them ; but these were not the real plot against public liberty. These outrages were set on one side while a search was made where there was nothing to find ; a search after imaginary conspiracies where the voice of the nation forbade eyes to turn ; after conspiracies which not all the efforts of calumny have been able to make even plausible."

'The time, for which we are accountable to the nation,' he continued, 'must not be wasted in hearing the justification of M. d'Orléans ; let him publish whatever he thinks fit, it will only confirm our esteem for his patriotism.' And he asked his colleagues, "in order to express formally the degree of contempt which you have conceived for these infamous proceedings, these infamous calumnies ; in order to express formally your manner of feeling and thinking about the men who have persecuted two of your members and dared to attack their honour," to put the question to the vote at once, and pass the Committee's bill.¹ The bill passed by a very large majority.

It was generous of Barnave, who had just come out of the affair entirely unscathed, to associate himself with the defence of the unsavoury Orléans, and a smaller man would have kept silence. But the age was generous too and his motives were not misunderstood.

¹ *Journée du 6 octobre 1789. Affaire complete de MM. d'Orléans et Mirabeau. Par la Société Logographique, 1790, 139 pp., pp. 132-4 (B. M. F. R. 117).* Mirabeau's speech, already printed, is not included. Barnave is ill-reported, but his speech is fuller than in the *Moniteur*.

CHAPTER XI

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN PARIS

THE building selected for the National Assembly was not ready when the deputies left Versailles, and from Oct. 19th to Nov. 7th the sittings were held in a hall of the Archbishop's palace, inconvenient, small and airless. Barnave became a secretary, along with Target and Thouret, on Oct. 26th, and was holding that office when the Assembly moved, on Nov. 9th, to its permanent home in the 'Manège.'

The Manège was a riding-school. It had been built in 1721 for the boy Louis XV, and when the Court quitted Paris it had been lent to a private person, who opened a school there, added stables and a dwelling-house, and sold it in course of time to a successor. Thus, although it was Crown property, it had passed from hand to hand, and in 1789 was in possession of a certain de Villemotte, whose horses had to be turned out before preparations could be made for the Assembly.¹

It stood not far from the Tuileries Palace, on ground which is now occupied by the rue de Rivoli just to the east of its junction with the rue de Castiglione, and was a long, straight, narrow building, quite unpretentious; as may be seen in a bird's-eye view of it in a large plan of Paris of 1739.² Through the trees of the Tuileries gardens its slate roof, bristling with ventilators, was visible;³ and it might almost be said to stand in the gardens, for the terrasse des Feuillants ran along the southern wall, and from the windows spectators in the galleries conveyed news to the crowd which collected on this terrace when important questions were being debated. The Manège was separated from the rue St. Honoré by the garden and buildings of the large Feuillants convent, and another convent,

¹ Brette, *Histoire des Édifices*, 165, &c., from which book and its plans much of this information is taken.

² Plan de Paris, commencé l'année 1734. Dessiné et gravé sous les ordres de Messire Michel-Étienne Turgot, &c. Paris, 1739.

³ *Lanterne magique nationale*, no. ii, p. 12.

the Capucins, which also faced upon the rue St. Honoré, lay directly to the west. It was thus rather difficult of access, and the only approach for vehicles was through a long, narrow court on the east, which extended almost to the Palace. For foot-passengers covered ways had been made through each convent, by garden and cloister, and an open passage between the two convents, passing the west end of the Manège, already connected the Tuileries gardens with the street. The approaches were always crowded and busy, and both round them and in the precincts there soon sprang up an untidy growth of small shops and stalls, cafés, restaurants, book-sellers and the like ; for the custom of the time permitted this kind of traffic near and even inside public buildings. In 1790, when the two convents became national property, the Assembly took over the Capucins, and committees which in 1789 had sat in houses of the place Vendôme moved there.¹

The hall itself, round the outside of which ran a corridor, was an ill-proportioned room, 165 feet long by 41 wide and nearly 29 high. The waggon-roof seemed to absorb the orator's voice while it magnified disturbing noises, and the weak-voiced were again condemned to silence ; nevertheless speakers with good voices who understood how to manage them could make themselves well heard.² It was in all respects a poor exchange for the fine hall of Versailles, being ugly, stuffy, and at the same time draughty. In winter the six large, round-headed windows, high up on each side-wall, had to be kept tightly shut, and the two big stoves which warmed the room added to the closeness of a poisonous atmosphere. The watchful care of Dr. Guillotin improved matters greatly. He and his committee saw to it that hall and environs were kept scrupulously clean, put in ventilator after ventilator, and purified the air by means of vinegar and aromatics, burnt, evaporated, and sprinkled about. Thanks to these precautions, though eyes and digestions suffered, there were comparatively few deaths among the deputies and no serious

¹ Brette, loc. cit. ; *Compte rendu et Rapport présentés à l'Ass. Nat. par les Commissaires de la Salle*, dated 30 Aug. 1791 (Paris, 1791, 25 pp.), pp. 20-1 and note.

² Brette, loc cit., 168 ; *Journal de Paris*, 10 Nov. 1789, p. 1459.

illness.¹ No doubt the neighbourhood of the Tuileries gardens, in which they could stroll or sit under the trees whenever business allowed, helped to keep them in good health.

The seats in the hall, upholstered in green, were arranged as they had been at Versailles, in tiers amphitheatre-wise; six rows along the sides of the room, and twelve at each end, towering above their neighbours. The top rows of the western end were sometimes called the Mountain, a name given them by their occupants, and about the middle of these rows Barnave and his friends usually sat.² The president sat in the middle of the south side; the secretaries sat at a table beneath him, and just opposite him was the enclosure of the bar, with the tall tribune, something like a big pulpit, rising up behind it. This was the tribune from which long speeches were made and reports were read; but there were two others, one at each end of the hall, which were occasionally used, and when members had only a few words to say they spoke from their places.³

In the long, narrow, oval space left in the middle of the room two stoves stood up conspicuous. Candles were at first used for lighting and afterwards lamps; most of these were set in chandeliers hanging from the roof. Up to the autumn of 1790 the hangings and furniture, which came from the royal stores, were magnificent; but when the civil list had been decreed all were returned to the King, and quite plain substitutes, chosen with the regard for economy which the deputies consistently showed over their own expenses, were put in their place.⁴

Round the greater part of the hall ran galleries. The large ones at either end, open to the public, were always full, and those who wished to secure good places had to come early. The galleries often expressed satisfaction or disapproval noisily, but as long as the Constituent Assembly sat they were kept strictly in bounds, and though the audience formed a chorus and may have influenced the timid, it is not too much to say that they never affected the decisions of the Assembly

¹ Cabanis, *Journal de la Maladie de Mirabeau*, 7; *Compte rendu*, 21-4.

² *L'Ami des Patriotes*, ii. 248 note. It was also called "the rock" (*Le Vêritable Portrait de nos Législateurs*, 24).

³ *Point du Jour*, iv. 147; *Moniteur*, iv. 242; Miss Berry, *Journals*, i. 218.

⁴ *Compte rendu*, 15, 16.

or the course of the debates. There seems no evidence to support the assertion, frequently made, that the occupants of the public galleries were paid. It is probable enough that the seats were sometimes packed by ardent and gratuitous supporters of particular measures. Smaller galleries along the side-walls, to which admission was by ticket, were allotted to friends of president, secretaries and deputies, to the supplementary deputies, the Paris Commune, and commercial deputies, sent by the great towns to watch their interests. Behind a grille, at the back of the president, sat the reporters,¹ or some of them.

Those who dislike popular government find it profitable to attack parliaments, and they are sometimes helped in their warfare by ultra-democrats who mistake the conditions under which alone such government is possible in large states. The Constituent Assembly, illustrious embodiment of reasonable liberty, has been an especial mark for the shafts of such enemies, and it is noteworthy that everything which has been urged against it in later days was said while it was still sitting. The easiest and most plausible reproach to bring against a representative assembly is, that it is not representative, and the modern taunts of "bourgeois" only echo the complaints of extreme journalists of the day, who declared that the Assembly was betraying the people, insisted that constituencies ought to have the right to recall a deputy as soon as he ceased to please them, and claimed a referendum for every important measure. Loustallot, the bitter but not bloodthirsty young patriot who wrote in the *Révolutions de Paris*, a weekly paper with a great circulation, practically accepted the assumption which underlies such demands, namely that representative government is impossible. He would have left nothing to the decision of future legislatures but unimportant matters requiring quick settlement, and he would have allowed constituencies to hang representatives who "usurped the sovereignty" of the people by disobeying their mandates.²

Writers of the autocratic party, if we may so call it, have

¹ Halem, *Blicke auf einen Theil . . . Frankreichs*, pt. ii. 54.

² *Révolutions de Paris*, iv. 734-5 and note.

attacked and still attack the Assembly in a different manner, by attempting to belittle it.¹ They have represented it as a kind of pandemonium, as a school of windy declamation, where much nonsense was talked and little was done. It is Taine, whose object it was to discredit the whole Revolution in an insidious and plausible way, who has popularized this theory. Students of English literature who have read his history of that subject will not need to be warned against his methods, while students of the French Revolution can now read the book in which M. Aulard refutes him.² Taine's attack on the earlier Revolution is based upon what is often considered conclusive proof, the testimony of the shrewd contemporary observer, and for Taine the shrewdest of all observers is that great detractor of the Constituent Assembly, the Genevese Mallet du Pan, a journalist who, as an authority on the Revolution, has been exalted to a pinnacle from which it is high time he was dislodged.³ What is the shrewd observer? He is the man who has looked on unmoved at every great event in human history and seen only its seamy side; he is one of those who "live in Paradise as if God was not there," noticing only that Adam and Eve are naked and prophesying that the beasts will soon eat them. Mallet du Pan, to do him justice, would have perceived the presence of the Almighty, and would have criticized him from the superior standpoint of a citizen of Geneva.

It is chiefly through the testimony of Mallet du Pan that the legend of the futility and bad behaviour of the Constituent Assembly has gained credence, and a telling piece of evidence in support of his views is furnished by a quotation, printed in his memoirs, from a letter written by the well-known deputy, Garat le jeune, to Condorcet, and published at the end of 1791.⁴ Garat, who had reported the debates for the

¹ Mirabeau said on 6 Nov. 1790: "We have long observed the different means that are successively employed to make the Assembly pass for a conventicle or for a battle-field." *Moniteur*, vi. 312.

² Taine, *historien de la Révolution française*. Paris, 1908.

³ It would be easy to prove in detail that Mallet was often ill-informed.

⁴ *Dominique-Joseph Garat, membre de l'Assemblée Constituante, à M. Condorcet, membre de l'Assemblée Nationale*. Dec. 1791 (Paris, 85 pp.), pp. 12-13.

Journal de Paris, declares that they were often so disgraceful that he was obliged to smooth over violences, to edit, and even to invent, for fear that if the dreadful truth became known the Assembly would be utterly discredited. No words could be stronger; yet when the whole letter is read it will be seen that Garat's assertions must be taken in a limited sense, and that they appear to refer only to the earlier days of the Assembly. Whatever he insinuates, we may be certain that we know the worst. Mallet, who reported the debates in the *Mercur*, never let an opportunity for criticism slip, yet his accounts of noise and tumult tell us no more than we learn from the democratic papers.¹ There were, undoubtedly, frequent disturbances; no one disliked them more than the 'patriot' deputies; and their staunch supporter, the journalist le Hodey, made a speciality from the very beginning of noting any disorder: "the Assembly remains for half an hour in a state of noisy stagnation," is a remark that occurs again and again in his *Journal des États Généraux*. The worst of these scenes were due to the obstructive tactics of the Right.

But when the subject before the Assembly was not a question which aroused peculiar irritation the debates were quiet and orderly, and even when they were stormy the tempest was intermittent, and good orators were listened to. The journalists could not have composed the impromptu speeches which appeared next day in their various papers, with just such differences as attest their authenticity. If the debates were invented, there must have been at least five reporters with a Shakespearian genius for characterization.

The exact truth can be learnt from the accounts of two Germans, Campe and Halem, who attended debates, the one in August 1789, the other in October 1790. When Campe first entered the gallery at Versailles, he could not catch a word the speakers said, but to his surprise he found that both Assembly and galleries, in spite of the "loud and disorderly noise," "seemed to understand everything well," and later

¹ The contemptuous Étienne Dumont (*Souvenirs*, 127-8) says that the *Courrier de Provence* gave "a faithful picture of the incoherence, the disorder, the violence [*fougue*] of the Assembly," and the *Courrier de Provence* agrees with the other papers.

he too became able to distinguish "principal" from "incidental" sounds. As soon as important business came on, he says, every one was all attention. Campe's account agrees perfectly with that of Halem, who gives another lively description of the Assembly. There was much coming and going among the deputies, who would leave their places to sit for a time on the carpeted steps by the president and secretaries. The president rang his big bell a great deal; he called on the speakers who were down on his list in their order, but he could not ensure them a quiet hearing. Speeches were interrupted by murmurs, by applause, by the remarks of members, some of whom managed to get listened to without being on the president's list, either by sheer strength of voice, or by throwing in some happy and apposite observation. "It is really not easy to shine as a speaker in this Assembly," says Halem, for the deputies were critical; they called out corrections at every slip; they would not tolerate the least hesitation in delivery; when the subject bored them they yawned and read the papers. They loved a joke and were always ready to roar with good-natured laughter at a piece of wit, an odd expression, a comical mistake.¹ When one of the men who had won renown for principles or for eloquence, "such as Mirabeau, the two Lameths, Noailles, Barnave among the democrats, Maury and Cazalès among the aristocrats," rose and nodded his desire to speak, minor orators gave way, and the Assembly became all ears.² But when the majority considered that a question had been sufficiently discussed, it refused to listen, even to favourite orators, and there were times when the best of them had to fight their hardest for a hearing.

Was there ever a free Assembly which kept quiet and listened to speeches it did not want to hear?

In spite of all drawbacks the amount of business done was stupendous; indeed, were it not that the circumstances rendered speed inevitable, one would say that too much was

¹ e. g. The whole Assembly, including the President, laughed heartily when Camus called the country-houses of the nobility "ci-devant châteaux". Le Hodey, vii. 284 (7 Jan. 1790).

² Campe, 177-8; Halem, pt. ii. 54-61.

got through and that too many matters were rushed. Mistakes were made, but the spirit which animated the work was admirable. The deputies always acted in concert. Alexandre Lameth, who knew the ins and outs of the Assembly as well as any man, says that its "love for the public good, its absolute devotion to the triumph of the Revolution, left small room for rivalries, for the weaknesses of self-love, and the irritations of individual vanity." Dubois-Crancé told the Jacobins the same story, during the Legislative Assembly. The patriots, he says, never dragged in business foreign to the affair in hand, never tried to speak for the sake of speaking, and gladly let the foremost orators, of whose fame they were proud, speak for them. These orators, again, never tried to cut each other out, never refuted contrary opinions merely to gain an easy popularity, and when once it had become clear that a majority was assured, were content that the debate should be closed, whether they had themselves spoken or no.¹

One would infer all this from a study of the debates, and one cannot help thinking that most of the writers who pass hasty judgements on the Constituent Assembly would be exceedingly surprised if they were to read the debates and follow the business of that Assembly during any single week of its existence, after the reports begin to be full.

We will glance at the different parties in the Assembly, taking Alexandre Lameth's well-known note as a guide.² They fell into two great divisions: the Right, often called the *Noirs*, and the Left, called by their enemies the *Enragés*, and each of these comprehended three sections.

The Right Centre was formed by the remains of Mounier's party, led by Malouet and Clermont-Tonnerre. They had accepted the development of the Revolution and worked loyally for a settlement, but as time went on they became more and more identified with the rest of the party, especially

¹ A. Lameth, ii. 92-3 note; *Discours de M. Dubois de Crancé sur la situation présente des affaires. Prononcé . . . 25 déc. 1791* (31 pp.), pp. 6-7. (B.M. F. 337). Barnave once gave up replying to Maury when, in answer to his inquiry whether Maury's arguments had made an impression, there were shouts of "No." 1 Feb. 1791. (Le Hodey, xxi. 22).

² A. Lameth, ii. 262-3 note.

with the less extreme section. To this second, less extreme section belonged a number of curés and a good many prominent men who, while strongly conservative, were interested in great political questions and the public welfare. Such were the chevalier de Montlosier and the marquises de Foucauld and de Folleville, who were often loudest in undignified obstruction, and yet would discuss details amicably when principles were once settled, and propose amendments which were gladly accepted by the leaders of the Left. Montlosier had eloquence, Foucauld a stentorian voice, and both of them, together with Folleville, the comte de Faucigny, Faydel and de Murinais, were always ready to shout and interrupt. Yet though obstreperous they were not spiteful, and bore no ill-will.

The members of the Right loved protests; written ones which they published, spoken ones which they delivered theatrically to the Assembly. Thus Foucauld once waved a paper before the deputies and the galleries, crying: "Here is my declaration. I am withdrawing from an Assembly where I am a slave! I am withdrawing now!" The *Moniteur* adds laconically, "He stays." It is worthy of note that only forty members of the Tiers-état ever signed these protests.¹

At the extreme right sat the most violent aristocrats, led by the two buffoons of the Assembly, d'Eprémesnil, a hero of the Paris Parlement, and the vicomte de Mirabeau, both good speakers and naturally able men, both unreasonable. D'Eprémesnil was rude and unruly; his proposals were so wildly reactionary that on one occasion he was almost believed to be raving, and Charles Lameth's suggestion that he should be sent to Charenton (the equivalent of Bedlam) for a fortnight, was considered a good way of passing over his folly lightly.²

Mirabeau Tonneau, as he was called during the last months of his career as a legislator, the enormously stout, bibulous younger brother of the orator, had a good share of the family wit, and his sallies, usually flavoured with the impudence which was his salient quality, are often quoted. When the decrees of the 4th August were being discussed, he told an assembly in which about three hundred advocates were sitting,

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 242; Brette, *Le Serment du Jeu de Paume*, p. li. note.

² *Moniteur*, v. 778-9.

that reforms would be vain unless advocates, solicitors, and all "that sort of leeches," "the subaltern instruments of justice," were abolished; and when there was a difference with the Republic of Genoa he proposed derisively that the Doge should be summoned to the bar. He showed his contempt for the Assembly by coming in drunk, and once, after getting into the tribune to interrupt Robespierre, remained there for an hour, swearing, and fighting with the friends who tried to remove him. For this offence his name was inscribed in the *procès-verbal*, after another hour spent in discussing his punishment. One member would have had him suspended for eight days, Barnave for the sitting only. Another time, when a rude remark aimed at the Right was shouted from a gallery, he seized a ladder, and would have mounted it to lay hands on the offender if other deputies had not interfered.¹

Two men dominated the Right, working together, yet wholly different in method and principle; Cazalès who was admired and liked, Maury who was admired and at the same time despised. Of Cazalès we shall speak later. The abbé Maury, a celebrated preacher and the indomitable champion of the aristocrats, was a son of the people, strong and large of limb. His superiority as an orator is unquestioned; he had a gift for improvisation and an erudition, not always accurate, of which he made a lavish display. Facile, fluent, imperturbable, ready, he could, when he chose to take the trouble and to restrain himself, state his case both clearly and persuasively, and his best speeches are very striking; but when not at his best he is often dull reading. It was his tendency to be vague and rambling; he did not grapple with his subject, above all he lacked sincerity. The low morality of the man shows through the fine words. He was a first-rate fighter and not much more, "a political grenadier," as Thibaudeau calls him, quite unscrupulous, and with little love for his country. Even his powers as a fighter were crippled by the licence he allowed himself, and he threw away by his conduct the influence his talents would have gained him. His effrontery was brazen, his behaviour in the Assembly scandalous; he

¹ Le Hodey, ii. 499; Duquesnoy, ii. 302; *Point du Jour*, v. 133; Gorsas, vii. 87; Duquesnoy, ii. 175; *Révolutions de Paris*, iv. 221-2.

was ashamed of nothing. He went into rages, he insulted the Assembly deliberately, he shook his fist at deputations, he tore at the tribune as if he would hurl it at his foes, he sent deputies spinning down its steps, he made scenes and disturbances without end. When a motion to censure him was made, he clapped it. Once and once only he was disconcerted: his bad life was notorious, and when he appealed in the tribune to his priestly character, the Left and the galleries burst out laughing. Maury is said to have blushed.¹

Even the estimable members of the Right were given to shaking fists and to other demonstrations of physical force. On one occasion when Barnave, who had already angered the party by a veiled allusion to the lax morals of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, keeper of the Seals, went on to ask whether any proud and free man would care for the post of judge if, to obtain it, he were "obliged to go begging the vile distinction of a minister's favour," Cazalès and Montlosier, as well as Maury and Mirabeau Tonneau, mounted into the tribune behind him, and endeavoured unsuccessfully to curtail his speech by squeezing the breath out of his body, as well as by shouting.²

The greatest blot upon this party is the campaign of slander and scurrility, carried on by word of mouth and in writing, for which some of its members were distinctly responsible. "The resource to which it [the aristocracy] has now turned is lampoons," Barnave tells his mother in December 1789. "One of these days I will send you a collection of these productions of impotent rage; you will be able to judge of the nature of the calumnies with which esteemed and beloved friends are loaded, by those with which you will see me covered myself."³

The aristocrats complained continually of the atrocities of the democratic Press, yet such atrocities were rare in the early days, when even Marat had not begun to cry perpetually for blood; and it was journalists and pamphleteers of the aristo-

¹ Thibaudeau, 101; Montlosier, 128; *Moniteur*, iv. 315, 716, and v. 366; *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 44, pp. 215-16.

² 6 May 1790; *Moniteur*, iv. 299.

³ *A.N. W.* 13. Draft letter, Paris, 15 Dec. 1789.

crat party who led the way to licence. It is common knowledge that the aristocrats first started the fashion of speaking disrespectfully of the royal family. When Barnave and Duport called the King "the executive power," they cried out in horror; but they only laughed when Mirabeau Tonneau described him as "a stout papa," driving away his poignant cares by catching flies on the Palace windows.¹ The name of Capet was introduced to make fun of d'Orléans, and the nuptials of Le Chapelier and Madame Élisabeth were a standing joke in the *Actes des Apôtres*. The very title of this journal, of which Mirabeau cadet was one of the chief writers, indicates their attitude towards a religion of which they proclaimed themselves the defenders.

Their contempt for the Assembly knew no bounds; all its proceedings seemed to them ridiculous, and the plebeian names of deputies exquisitely funny. They invented imaginary debates, in which the deputy Cochon made speeches consisting of "hon, hon, hon"; they actually wrote a poem telling how a wag put pitch on the seats of the Manège one night, so that when the deputies tried to rise, to vote for a decree, they stuck, and cried out that no law had ever been so hard to carry.² The former use of the Manège was an endless source of wit; the deputies were described as horses, and the horse became a fierce and filthy beast. Poor Théroigne de Méricourt, an early specimen of the political woman, at that time perfectly respectable and well-meaning, was in the habit of attending the debates, and the *Actes des Apôtres* was full of fictitious love-affairs between her and deputies with whom she was quite unacquainted. No condemnation can be too strong for the kind of ridicule and slander with which individuals were overwhelmed. Target was practically extinguished by loathsome jokes;³ he lost confidence and from being a leader sank into the background.

Charles Lameth, who had himself given his enemies a handle against him, was of tougher fibre. The story is worth repeating. The arrest of Barentin, late keeper of the Seals, had

¹ *Lanterne magique nationale*, no. ii, p. 12.

² *Actes des Apôtres*, nos. 10 and 50.

³ *Feuille du Jour*, 5 Dec. 1790, p. 38.

been ordered in connexion with Besenval's affairs, and in Oct. 1789 the 'Comité des Recherches', of which Lameth was then a member, authorized the Police committee of Paris to search for him in the Convent of the Annonciades, where he was said to have taken refuge with his sister, the abbess. It was reported that Lameth had conducted the search in person,¹ and he was henceforth known to the aristocrats as "the victor of the Annonciades". The marquis de Bonnay, a prominent deputy, twice President, and an excellent President too, wrote anonymously fragments of a mock-heroic poem descriptive of the exploit.² This disgusting pasquinade, thought excessively witty, went through several editions and was republished at Hamburg in 1796. It is characteristic that the marquis reserved his cruellest hits for three unoffending women: Madame de Lameth, Madame Bailly, and the abbess. Charles Lameth's revenge was to calm the Assembly when the abbé de Montesquiou complained of libels and asked for a Press law. 'He was,' he said, 'the last man who could be suspected of partiality for the writers of libels,' but he urged the Assembly not to give to private complaints the time which ought to be devoted to weightier matters.³

It is hardly necessary to remark that it would be most unjust to include all the Right in the condemnation just passed.

We must now leave this party and turn to the Left, which was also divided into three sections.

There was at present no marked difference between the middle section, to which the bulk of the party belonged, and the extreme Left, led by Barnave, Duport, and the Lameths, who, though more advanced in views than men like Le Chapelier and Thouret, were never violent or exaggerated. But a small group of men who usually voted with the rest of the extreme Left differed widely from their leaders. The most important

¹ It is most unlikely that the deputies attended the search, and in the best account of the debate on 21 Nov. 1789, when the matter was inquired into, that of the *Patriote français* (the paper of Brissot, who was a member of the Paris Police committee), the Comité des Recherches denies having had anything to do with the search beyond authorizing it. (*Patriote*, 23 Nov. 1789, p. 2.)

² *La Prise des Annonciades*. It is always attributed to de Bonnay.

³ 22 Dec. 1789. *Point du Jour*, v. 214.

of this small group were Buzot, good, melancholy, enthusiastic, slightly jaundiced ; Pétion, who spoke in every debate and did not bore contemporaries with his "sterile loquacity" as he often bores his readers ; Reubell, the Alsatian Jew-hater, big, burly, honest, rude, a lover of contradiction for contradiction's sake, and Robespierre ; all four advocates.¹

The third section of the Left, which sat nearest the centre, comprised men who, according to Alexandre Lameth, had no decided system and followed the impulse of the moment. Some of these were afterwards carried away by the Revolution ; Camus, for instance, and the abbé Grégoire, neither of whom became cruel ; Merlin of Douai, and Barère. Merlin, a learned legist, excelled, says M. Sorel, in expressing the old maxims of monarchical law in terms of the new thought ;² he was never personally cruel, yet he had a hand in some of the worst enactments of the Terror. Barère, the future "Anacreon of the guillotine," was a handsome young advocate, a good speaker and useful member, skilful in suggesting compromises which worked well and saved much time. His intentions were good, yet his speeches, sensible as they are, do not ring true, and one gathers from them in some indefinable way which way the wind is setting. Barère was not a fighter, for good or for evil. Those who knew him say that it was cowardice which drove him into cruelty, but it must have been native insincerity which enabled him to develop into the romancer he afterwards became. As yet he was not patently untruthful and his paper, the *Point du Jour*, is quite trustworthy.

There were so many distinguished men on the Left who made their mark in various ways, that we can only mention a few of whom we have, as yet, said nothing. Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, lame and delicate-featured, was always enigmatic and known to be self-seeking and ambitious, but at this time he was as sincere as a born intriguer can be. His morals, no worse than those of many contemporary bishops who went through life respected, were not of the standard which the Revolution demanded from the Church, but his position made him so valuable that they were overlooked. He

¹ Montjoye, *Ami du Roi*, &c., pt. ii. 101 ; Larevellière-Lépeaux, i. 332-3.

² Sorel, ii. 96.

stands, like Mirabeau, apart from his fellow deputies, a man cast in a different mould. The ascetic Jansenist, Fréteau, judge of the Paris Parlement, who spoke with authority on foreign affairs, was trusted and respected ; his tendency to be unduly perturbed explains Mirabeau's irreverent nickname, "Goody Fréteau". The duc de Liancourt, a brilliant courtier, with "all the air of a man who would wish to lord over men, but to cast himself at the feet of women", says Miss Burney,¹ was also an enlightened philanthropist, whose reports on the condition of the poor show a wisdom and insight which we are accustomed to regard as purely modern. The advocate Prieur, who afterwards earned renown as a member of the Comité de salut public, an able and sincere man, much to the fore in debates though he did not make long speeches, was an ally of Barnave and his friends. The old judge, Goupil de Préfelne, always spoken of as the Nestor of the Assembly, was erratic, independent, witty and sarcastic. D'André, a parliamentarian of Aix, smooth-tongued, good-natured and unscrupulous, was known to be a ministerialist ; yet he looked so clumsy with his heavy body, negro-like features and dark complexion, that it was hard to believe he was finessing, and his conversation was so engaging that even severe patriots could not help liking him. Dubois de Crancé, a retired officer, set the army in a dangerous ferment by speaking of the regulars as "brigands", and had to explain his words away. The marquis de Sillery, Madame de Genlis's husband, a flowery and much-admired orator, was a friend of the Orléans family ; so was red-haired Voidel, president of the Comité des Recherches. We cannot presume to judge of the pretensions of the lights of the Finance Committee, Anson, the marquis de Montesquiou, and Lebrun, afterwards consul. The abbé Gouttes, who looked and spoke like some early Christian from the ages of faith, was an impressive figure, but there were few orators among the lesser Clergy. Some of the men who spoke often and exercised much influence remain colourless figures, such as Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau, a young President of the Paris Parlement, who was an important member of the Committee of Criminal Jurisprudence ;

¹ Madame d'Arblay's *Diary and Letters*, v. 129 (Macmillan, 1904-5).

and the allies of Lafayette, the prudent Emmery, twice President ; Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, a young advocate who published a journal ; and Beaumez, First President of the Artois law court, who had played high with Alexandre Lameth in unregenerate days.¹

There were rude interrupters on the Left as well as on the Right, and plenty of deputies who shouted as lustily as Foucauld himself when there was a disturbance. The Lameths made much use of their penetrating voices. Barnave was always dignified, we never hear of him as shouting ; he hardly ever interrupted and never without excellent reason, and it was the rarest thing for him to ejaculate a remark.

The deputies who did their duty, and they were the majority, led busy lives. Every week-day there was a morning sitting, lasting from nine o'clock till three or later, and after February 1790 the Sunday holiday was given up except on rare occasions. Three times a week, and oftener if business was urgent, there were evening sittings from six-thirty to ten or later. To this many deputies added arduous work on committees, and most of them attended political clubs. All who had any influence were overwhelmed with affairs connected with the interest of constituents who had been harassed and uprooted by great changes, while every day brought its tale of interviews. " Nothing can equal the continuous pressure of important business, except our weariness and absolute need of rest in intervening moments," writes Barnave,² and when his mother reproached him touchingly for a long silence, he answers : " I am certainly inexcusable for having put off writing to you for so long, but you can hardly have an idea of the way every moment is filled up ; so much so that, as to correspondence, far from being able to answer all the letters of individuals, I have not even time to answer all those I get from towns or communities." ³

The letters which still remain among his papers give some idea of what was expected of him. Besides looking after the general interests of Dauphiné and of Grenoble, he had to help

¹ Dampmartin, *Événements*, i. 33.

² In June 1790. *Œuvres*, iv. 341.

³ *A. N. W.* 13. Draft letter. Paris, 15 Dec. 1789.

numerous compatriots whom the Revolution had deprived of their places, to get new ones. "I am far from thinking that you can do everything about which I am, so to say, forced to speak to you; you may be sure that I only write to you on behalf of the smaller number of those who come to me," says his mother,¹ who was never weary of urging the claims of some excellent dispossessed citizen with invaluable experience in the public service, or of asking him to obtain the discharge of some poor soldier with a family in misfortune. Nuns and monks appealed to the powerful deputy whose kindly feelings towards them were well known, to forward their interests in the Assembly. Uncle de Presle, who could not get his military pension paid, considered his nephew responsible. "When we had a king I was paid punctually," he writes meaningly, in spite of Madame Barnave's assurances that he had become "very patriotic." Begging letters came; from suppliants like the woman who "conjured" the "illustrious, incomparable light of the Assembly, precious pearl of the kingdom," to "bestow on me two assignats of two hundred livres," and from petitioners who made their requests less crudely. Correspondents took up the wildest rumours; one rails at him for buying an estate in Auvergne, when it is well known that his private means are small; another congratulates him, quite in earnest, on having won half a million francs at play. Authors submitted, without permission, works which he sometimes lost; good advice and plans and projects were showered upon him. Every one asked for interviews, for he only saw people by appointment, and one officer, offended at this, observes that though he could quite well say all he wishes in writing, he does not choose to do so.²

Letter-writing had always been irksome to Barnave, and his mother, who could not bear that any slur should rest upon him, was distressed when people complained that they could not get an answer out of him. She exhorted him to 'conquer his natural indolence about writing', which his busy life had "strengthened, but not excused to such an extent." But when one angry friend told her that the much less busy

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. 29. St. Robert, 8 Feb. 1791.

² *A. N. W.* 12 and *W.* 13.

d'Agoult, to whom he had also written, had not answered either, "that consoled me a little".¹

Paris was a strange and wicked city to many of the deputies, and they crowded into hotels and lodgings near the Assembly, where those who had no special expenses could live in comfort on the eighteen livres a day which was their salary; an allowance which sufficed for frugal men who did not take cabs.² Many who could manage it had brought their wives, and friendly little circles were formed.

Barnave went to live with the Lameths; "excellent citizens, who share in the highest degree the affection of the friends of liberty and the hate of its enemies",³ he describes them to his mother. Their family house was in the "cul-de-sac de Notre-Dame-des-Champs" (the western part of what is now the rue de Fleurus), on the south side of the river, close to the Luxembourg gardens, and with a garden of its own which extended to the rue de Vaugirard, opposite the garden of the Carmelite convent.⁴ The hideous boulevard Raspail, which cuts a gash through this part of Paris, seems to run exactly over the spot where the hôtel de Lameth stood. He had rooms of his own and kept two servants as well as a secretary. Another deputy lived in the house, the Lameths' old tutor, Massieu, curé of Sergy, an unattractive specimen of the revolutionary cleric, who became a bishop, renounced his orders, and dabbled in terrorism.

When members lived a long way from the Assembly, a club close at hand was a convenience, and the Lameths frequented the Club Valois in the Palais-Royal, an institution founded by Siéyes and others, to which most of their friends in the political world and many of their enemies belonged. Barnave is not on the only extant list of members, of 1790,⁵ but was often there with his friends, and it was probably there that he had the much cited encounter with Gouverneur Morris, the one-legged American statesman (another of Taine's shrewd

¹ 6 Dec. 1789 and 2 Nov. 1790, *A. N. W.* 13. 112 and 94.

² A. Lameth, i. 422; *Patriote français*, 7 Aug. 1791, p. 157.

³ Letter of 15 Dec. 1789, quoted above.

⁴ M. Dumas, ii. 470.

⁵ See J. B. M. A. Challamel, *Les Clubs contre-révolutionnaires*, p. 33, &c.

observers), who fondly imagined himself a power in the Revolution. Barnave, says the story, which presumes him a raw, provincial youth, sought out the American patriot, and for a whole hour poured out his opinions on liberty. At the end of the time, perceiving that Morris was bored, he asked him what he thought of his principles. "I think, sir, that you are more republican than I am," replied Morris.¹ It would certainly have been difficult to be less "republican" than Morris who, whatever he felt in his own country, had all an American's love for the old order in Europe, showed "an intolerable aristocracy" in his opinions, and was so open an enemy to the Revolution that when he was appointed minister in 1792 Lafayette, a personal friend, remonstrated with Washington.²

At the end of 1790 the Jacobin members of the Club Valois, dissatisfied with changes in the rules (with the introduction of gambling games, hitherto forbidden, if we may believe Fréron), started a similar club, with an annual subscription of 102 livres, in rooms in the late "Chancellerie" of the duc d'Orléans. It was called, from the street in which the Chancellerie is situated, the "Club de la rue des Bons Enfans" and was opened in Jan. 1791. Of this club Barnave was a member.³

¹ Mallet du Pan, *Mémoires*, ii. 240. Barnave was probably the "Member of the States-General" with whom Morris entered into discussion at the Club one day, who, as Morris complacently observes, "shows his own imbecility." G. Morris, i. 202, 22 Oct. 1789.

² *Gazette universelle* (a ministerial journal), 4 Oct. 1791, p. 1107; Lafayette, iii. 423.

³ *Orateur du Peuple*, iv. 204; *Gazette universelle*, 20 Feb. 1791, p. 203 (*et alibi*). There is a receipt for Barnave's subscription among his papers, W. 13. Allusions to the "Chancellerie" Club are often met with.

CHAPTER XII

THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

It will be convenient here to cast a hasty glance at some important branches of the work of the Assembly and the share which Barnave took in them. He was not one of the experts to whom the proposal of great constitutional measures belonged by right ; he was not, and he never imagined himself to be, an originator. His part was to criticize, to defend, to amend great measures when they came before the Assembly, and here, taking the history of the Assembly as a whole, he was unrivalled. It is safe to say that the more we study his work, his brilliant and luminous speeches on controversial subjects, his useful contributions to the discussion of details, the higher our opinion of his abilities will be. " I never knew a young man of his age with more talents," says the critical Malouet.¹

The task of the National Assembly was threefold ; to sweep away the old order, to organize the new, to preserve the country from anarchy during the transitional period ; and the main work of making the Constitution was daily interrupted by business of every kind. The executive power had not only lost much of its authority, it did not use what remained and adopted the tactics of " shamming dead," as Charles Lameth said. The ministers did as little as they could and referred everything to the Assembly, probably with the idea of causing embarrassment.² Even had they helped instead of hindering, their fiats would hardly have proved efficient, if unsupported by decrees. The Assembly was therefore compelled to administer as well as to legislate and to decide upon every detail, from the means to be employed in quelling particular mutinies down to the law court which should try the claims of the heirs of one Jean Thierry, a millionaire who had died in Venice many years before, and nothing rouses one's admiration more than the manner in which all such details were decided upon principle. The necessary link with the executive, which the ministers did

¹ Malouet, i. 269.

² *Moniteur*, vi. 177 ; A. Lameth, ii. 51.

not supply, was found in the institution of committees, the number of which was gradually increased in order to facilitate business. As questions came before the Assembly they were referred to one of these committees, and if they were important a report was ordered. Much business was also brought to the committees immediately, and was decided by them provisionally or, if the affair were unimportant, finally. Thus it came to pass that prominent members of committees occupied very much the position of ministers. They were not responsible for the execution of their orders, but they could put pressure on the ministers or other authorities whose business it was to carry them out.

The committees proposed the legislation which concerned their respective departments. The whole committee adopted a report and a bill, drawn up by a member, and this was introduced in the name of the committee ; but members of the committee who did not agree with the majority were perfectly free to criticize and to oppose, and constantly did so. At least thirty-one committees were appointed at various times ; the most important were : the Committees of Constitution and Revision ; the Diplomatic, Military, Naval, Ecclesiastical, Financial, Feudal, Colonial ; those that dealt with Taxation, Pensions, Criminal Jurisprudence ; and the untranslatable "Comité des Rapports" and "Comité des Recherches", of which a word must be said. The function of the first was to inquire into complaints made to the Assembly on matters of public order, police, &c. The business of the much-abused "Comité des Recherches", founded in July 1789, on Duport's motion, was to receive information regarding any plots against the safety of the State and to report on them to the Assembly ; its object was not only to protect the State against plots, but to prevent rioting and violence by giving the public confidence that their interests were being watched over and that justice would be done. The inertia and bad faith of the Government made some such measure necessary.¹

¹ See Le Hodey, ii. 233, &c., *Point du Jour*, i. 326, &c. ; A. Lameth, i. 83. Duport proposed a committee of four. His motion has been erroneously represented as an attempt to get the business of the Assembly into the hands of himself and his friends, which was foiled by d'André,

It was inevitable that the ablest men should be elected on many committees. Efforts were sometimes made to pass a rule that no deputy should belong to more than one committee, but the Assembly refused to be fettered, and left it to the conscience of the deputy to resign when he found that he could not be useful.¹ A tenet of the Revolution enjoined that all public business should be conducted in the most open manner possible, and the committees followed this rule. The public was not admitted to their sittings, but other deputies came in freely and any one with information to give was welcomed. The Comité des Recherches, indeed, and the Diplomatic Committee had to maintain a certain amount of secrecy, and the Assembly was always ready to approve of a needful discretion.

In questions relating to the keeping of order Barnave was much to the fore. The Revolution was still beset with enemies, and plots to overthrow it were constantly coming to light. To us who know the result these attempts may well seem pathetically futile, but to the patriots, who feared for the fate of the Revolution, they were an ever-present danger, demanding a watchful eye and a firm though never a cruel hand. One menace to liberty came from those very Parlements which had done such service in its cause. They were strongly opposed to the judicial reforms to which the Assembly was pledged, and their power of registering laws enabled them, if they chose, to combine with the King and to set their united forces up as rivals to the National Assembly. It seemed possible that they might take this course, and their suppression was regarded as necessary. The Assembly was not ungrateful, but the interests of the nation came first. It must also be remembered that the patriots who had supported the Parlements had been well aware of the unconstitutional nature of their resistance; Barnave, for instance, had pointed it out more than once.²

who had the number of the committee raised to twelve. There seems nothing in the facts to show how this idea of Duport's motives can have arisen, yet it is repeated by M. Aulard, *Orateurs de l'Assemblée Constituante*, 462.

¹ Barnave and A. Lameth upheld freedom of choice on 21 Jan. 1790; *Journal des Débats*, no. 152, sup. p. 1; cf. Duquesnoy, ii. 299.

² e.g. in the letter to the King, which he wrote for the Three Orders of

On Nov. 3rd, on the motion of Alexandre Lameth—delicacy of feeling forbade any lawyer to make it—it was decreed that the Parlements, at the time in vacation, should remain in vacation until further notice. The decree was sanctioned by the King, but the Parlements of Rouen and Metz only registered it with vigorous protests against its tyranny and illegality; the Parlement of Rennes refused to register. The ministers themselves brought these protests to the notice of the Assembly. The Rouen Parlement had set up the 'persecuted' King in opposition to the Assembly in a very culpable manner, and Barnave supported a motion of Barère to commit the Vacation Chamber for trial. For the other two Parlements he himself proposed much milder punishments, and this though he considered their resistance to be part of a counter-revolutionary plot.¹ His motion on the Parlement of Metz passed, but the Assembly pardoned the magistrates at the request of their city, as it had pardoned those of Rouen at the request of the King. Barnave showed the same mildness when the Estates of the little province of Cambrésis defied the Assembly, and he carried a motion for their simple dissolution. Le Chapelier, who was supported by the Lameths, would have had the members prosecuted.² On Sept. 6th 1790 a new decree put a final end to the Parlements.

The Assembly did its best to put down popular rioting, and when in October 1789 an innocent baker was murdered by the Paris mob, a riot act, on the English model, was enacted, empowering municipal authorities to call in troops and to disperse, by firing, any mob which refused to break up after the display of a red flag and a summons thrice repeated. The

Dauphiné, 13 Sept. 1788: "In this enforced silence of the people, when the Constitution was forgotten, the magistrates found themselves the only men who could defend the rights of the nation . . . They accorded subsidies for the nation, and only the solemn confession of their error has justified them." (*Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée générale des Trois-Ordres de la Province de Dauphiné tenue à Romans*. Grenoble, 1788 (large edition, p. 94). Cf. *Coup d'œil*, 13-14, and see note on pp. 45-6.

¹ 10 Nov. 1789, *Journal de Paris*, 12 Nov., p. 1468; 17 Nov. 1789, *Point du Jour*, iv. 203-4; 9 Jan. 1790, *Point du Jour*, v. 395-8.

² 19 Nov. 1789; Le Hodey, vi. 60; Duquesnoy, ii. 82. Barnave's motion passed on 24 Nov.

proposal was Mirabeau's. Barnave was one of the supporters of this *loi martiale* as it was called ; a law which Marat and other demagogues always deplored as the ruin of liberty.¹

In the disturbed state of the kingdom it was, however, impossible to punish disorder with severity. In many cases it had been purposely fomented by enemies of the Revolution ; as in the South, where these enemies attempted in the spring of 1790 to bring about civil war, by playing on religious passions already excited by the decrees about the Clergy. In many cases the deputies sympathized with the people who rose up in revolt against the constituted authorities, and Arthur Young heard Volney saying openly, in the presence of other members, that the citizens of Toulon, who had imprisoned the naval commander whom they suspected of treasonable intentions, were in the right.² Pacification rather than repression was the policy of the Assembly, and this is well expressed in an answer which Barnave wrote from Versailles to a correspondent, in September 1789.

"Sir,—I have received the letter you have done me the honour to write to me in favour of the unfortunate country-folk, prosecuted on account of the havoc which has been committed in the Viennois. It is certainly impossible to excuse them, whatever the methods of deceit may be which have been employed to lead them into such reprehensible excesses ; but I believe that the excessive rigour and repeated inquisitions to which they are being subjected are no less contrary to real prudence than to humanity. It may be necessary in turbulent days to bring a misled people back to order by some severe examples, but it is always dangerous and cruel to pursue faults of this nature with a long vengeance and numerous punishments. I have never believed that this was the meaning of the National Assembly's decree,³ and yet I was one of the members of the committee to which the drawing up of the decree was entrusted. This law had only two objects ; one to stop disorders,

¹ Barnave on Oct. 21, *Le Hodey*, v. 108-9 ; *Ami du Peuple*, nos. 121, pp. 5 and 132, p. 8.

² A. Young, 305 ; A. Lameth, ii. 198-222.

³ Decree of 10 Aug. 1789. *Procès-verbal*, no. 46, p. 1, &c., vol. ii.

and the other to deal with the original causes which had excited them. It could not enter into the spirit of the Assembly to foment persecution and to depopulate the countryside ; if anyone were guided by these intentions he would be as far from that spirit as those are who have brought disorder and havoc there. I hope, Sir, that in spite of all the power which is exercised in our Assembly by the aristocracy, at the head of which M. d'Eprenail and the abbé Maury are at present to be seen,—I hope that it will be possible at a favourable moment, to get the amnesty you desire declared, and I beg you to be persuaded of the zeal and warmth with which I shall try to obtain it. I am, Sir, with all respect, your very humble and obedient servant, Barnave.”¹

One of the first and greatest constitutional measures of the Assembly was to lay the foundations of modern France, by abolishing the ancient provinces which had split the country into distinct bodies and by redividing it into the eighty-three departments which we know. This was a bold stroke of genius, the idea of which is always attributed to Siéyes, but it was Thouret who proposed it in a famous report (Sept. 29th), and saw the measure through. Barnave made an excellent speech in the debate (Nov. 4th).² In connexion with this work the name of Gossin should never be forgotten. He was a judge from Bar-le-Duc, who did the lion's share in settling, first the limits of the new divisions, and afterwards the seats of the new tribunals, and he carried out his difficult, delicate, and tedious task with a zeal and an impartiality which won him the esteem and gratitude of all his colleagues. It was the only reward he obtained, and further services to his country sent him to the guillotine ; Fouquier-Tinville having, either intentionally or by a criminal negligence, put the papers which exonerated him from false accusations into the wrong dossier.³

The new electoral system was based upon the new divisions. Each department was subdivided into districts and cantons. The cantons held the “ Primary Assemblies ” in which all “ active citizens ” voted. The “ Primary Assemblies ” elected the

¹ A. N. W. 13. 214. Draft letter, Versailles, Sept. 1789.

² Le Hodey, v. 347-9.

³ *Journal de Paris*, 17 Feb. 1790, p. 190 ; Mortimer-Ternaux, *Hist. de la Terreur*, iv. 507, &c.

“electors”, and the “electors”, meeting in departmental assemblies, elected the deputies to the National Assembly, and also the members of the administrative assemblies of the department and its districts. In towns, and villages or groups of villages, there were municipalities or “communes”, elected by the “active citizens”. The lesser administrative assemblies were subordinate to the greater and all were subordinate to the authority of the Crown. Needless to say, any distinction of Orders in elections was abolished.

The pecuniary qualifications for the franchise were fixed as follows: the “active citizen” had to pay, in direct taxes, the equivalent of the local wages for three days’ work; the “elector” that of ten days; the candidate for the Legislative Assembly, a “silver mark”, which meant about fifty francs. The *marc d’argent* decree excited a good deal of feeling, as the qualification excluded really poor men. It was opposed by the advanced party, Barnave among them, and two unsuccessful attempts were made to get it modified.¹

The Assembly intended the “active citizen” qualification to admit a large number of voters, and Barnave held up to condemnation the tyranny of certain country municipalities, whose members, after having kept wages low “when justice and humanity bade them raise them,” now fixed the wages for a day’s work so high that a number of poor men were deprived of their votes.²

The reorganization of the finances, which included a new system of taxation, was an important branch of work. The Assembly had taken over the control of the revenues, and the King—whose title, by the way, had been changed to King of

¹ Barnave was one of those who tried to speak against the decree and were not heard (*Journal de Paris*, 30 Oct. 1789, p. 1395; *Courrier français*, 30 Oct. 1789, p. 238). The later attempts were on 3 and 7 Dec.

² 15 Jan. 1790, *Journal de Paris*, 16 Jan. 1790, p. 61; *Point du Jour*, vi. 51-2; Barnave supported, in opposition to the Constitutional Committee, a measure on which he afterwards changed his mind; viz. that deputies should only be eligible in the department in which they resided. But he proposed an amendment which did away with most of the restriction, by providing that outsiders might be elected if they obtained more than the “absolute majority” of votes required. Le Hodey, vi. 41-2, 18 Nov. 1789.

the French—was requested on Jan. 4th 1790 to fix his own Civil List. Six months later (June 9th), after further negotiations, he asked for more than a million pounds sterling a year (25,000,000 livres) together with the revenue coming from the Parks and Forests which he still retained, and the payment of his existing debts by the nation. This enormous grant was voted without discussion, so generously did the Assembly treat him. The deputies, in an access of gratitude at his moderation, even wished to take him their thanks in a body. They were dissuaded by Barnave, who pointed out that "a pecuniary arrangement" between the King and the nation was not a fitting occasion for such a demonstration, and the President was sent instead.¹

Very large expenses were incurred in paying off, at a fair valuation, the holders of suppressed offices who owned them because they had bought them; and the operation entailed much work, which was done by the Committees of the Assembly. Some economies, on the other hand, were effected over pensions, which were revised, reduced, or on occasion suppressed. "The inflexible Camus," who ruled the Pension Committee, became the terror of courtiers and wheedling ladies. But economy and reform were not enough to save the country from bankruptcy, and it was absolutely necessary to find some huge addition to the funds, with which the national debt could be paid. The vast estates of the clergy, from which monarchs in difficulties had already helped themselves, were the obvious resource, and on Nov. 2nd the Assembly decreed that the possessions of the clergy were at the disposal of the nation, on the condition that the expenses of public worship, the support of its ministers, and such charity to the poor as the clergy had supplied, should be otherwise provided for. The clergy fought this measure tooth and nail—a resistance which Barnave considered "very natural"²—but the leaders of the Left were unanimous, and in April 1790 the administration of all clerical property was definitely taken over by the nation, which became responsible for the maintenance of the clergy and the payment of the creditors of the clerical debt.

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 588.

² *A. N. W.* 13. 221. Draft of letter, Paris, 2 Nov. 1789.

But this measure did not bring the expected relief; coin, held up on account of its scarcity, was disappearing from circulation, and when the new national domains were put into the market it was so difficult to obtain, that intending purchasers could not find the money to buy. Something had to be done. Certain assignats, to the value of 400,000,000 livres, had been issued, but their circulation was a restricted one, and they were not enough. Various tinkering remedies were proposed by the Finance Committee and by individual members; the advanced party bent all their strength on carrying Mirabeau's sweeping remedy, which was, to issue enough assignats to pay off as much of the national debt as the national domains would cover, and to make them legal tender.

The very word "assignat" suggests valueless paper money recklessly issued, but the assignats of the Constituent Assembly were nothing of the kind. Barnave had always been firmly convinced that any suspicion, even, that the issue of ordinary paper money might be contemplated would be "fatal to credit"; and when, on Oct. 1st 1789, in a finance debate, an article was adjourned without the desired assurance, he went so far as to break the rules of the Assembly by returning to the adjourned article, and got himself called to order and "forced to silence."¹ Yet he was one of the strongest supporters of Mirabeau's assignats. In Mirabeau's scheme each assignat represented, not gold in reserve, but as much land as would sell for the nominal value of the assignat, and as each returned to the Treasury in exchange for land it was to be burnt. Mirabeau called them "paper earth." The assignats were thus perfectly safe as long as enough land was reserved to represent their value; and further, all who bought national property would become attached to the Revolution in their own interests. "I think that the effective sale of the national domains, the effective payment of the public debt, and the completion of the Constitution are attached to this measure," said Barnave, and the opponents of the measure, who preferred Necker's hand-to-mouth system, thought much the same; one of them, Toulon-geon, confesses that they opposed, not because they thought the assignats unsafe, but because they regarded the embarrassed

¹ Le Hodey, iv. 313; cf. Duquesnoy, i. 383.

state of the finances as the only barrier against excessive changes.¹

The speech with which, on Sept. 28th, Barnave finished a debate which had occupied the Assembly at intervals for a month, decided the question. It was one of his most admired discourses, and his purely financial arguments roused the galleries to such noisy delight that they had to be called to order. He wisely proposed to allay fears by decreeing that there should never be more than 1,000,000,000 livres worth of these assignats in circulation at a time, and though the bill he actually proposed was superseded, one founded on it passed by the small majority of eighty-five.² The measure fulfilled the hopes of its promoters; the national domains began to sell, and the creation of a large class of proprietors, whose title depended on the maintenance of the Revolution, is always considered to have done as much as anything else to give it stability.

Another of his triumphs was over a proposal, made in the autumn of 1790, to withhold part of the interest paid to the creditors of the National Debt, by way of taxation. The idea had already been repudiated in two decrees, but specious arguments were used and there was some danger that the Assembly might be led to reconsider the matter. Mirabeau, who particularly desired to shine in a question which he had much at heart, had a speech written for him by his friend Reybaz, packed with arguments of various kinds. But he was not able to deliver it, for Barnave, who spoke first and ignored circumstantial arguments, expounded the principles of taxation so effectually that the debate was closed. Mirabeau printed Reybaz's oration, thus showing its inferiority to Barnave's, and the disappointment rankled till the day of his death.³

The assumption of Church lands by the nation altered the

¹ Barnave on 28 Aug. 1790, *Moniteur*, v. 511; Toulangeon, i. 178.

² *Ami des Patriotes*, i. 91; *Moniteur*, v. 775-6 and vi. 4. Barnave's bill disputed the day with that of an unknown deputy, Poignot, whose articles were much like his, with modifications. The decree, drawn up by Camus, was founded on these two bills.

³ Speech on the *Taxation des Rentes*, 4 Dec. 1790 (*Moniteur*, vi. 546, *Journal des Débats*, no. 532). See Plan, *Un Collaborateur de Mirabeau*, 88-108 and 119. No objection was raised to taxing the "rentes" as part of the owner's income, when once they had been paid.

position of the religious orders, and in February 1790 the question of their suppression was brought forward. Barnave's speech on this occasion infuriated the Right. He said that the existence of religious houses was incompatible with the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, because their inmates were debarred from exercising these rights; and incompatible with the interests of society, because they lived among their fellow-men like aliens under independent chiefs; that it was also hurtful to religion on account of the scandals inseparable from such establishments.¹ The bill he proposed, suppressing religious houses, and forbidding their foundation in future, would have passed, but for the abbé de Montesquiou, who urged with seductive eloquence an alternative project, which without suppressing religious houses allowed their inmates to leave them if they wished. This gained priority, but before it could be put to the vote Thouret came to the rescue and contrived to get an amendment through, which turned the motion into Barnave's. The abbé had, however, saved the nuns. Men who did not wish to leave the cloister had to move into special houses provided for them; women were allowed to stay on in their own familiar surroundings. "You do not wish to make them unhappy," said the abbé, and the argument was enough for the Assembly.²

All the clergy, regular and secular, were to receive pensions. When the amount of these was being settled, Barnave, who had already urged the claims of the curés to a comfortable living stipend, not only spoke in favour of adequate allowances, but supported the abbé de Montesquiou in asking that the Jesuits should be generously treated, and carried the Assembly with him.³

It would have been wisest, having gone thus far, to leave well alone and to allow the Church to organize herself under new conditions. Unfortunately the Assembly went further, and in June and July decreed that "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" which is generally considered to be one of its two great mistakes.

¹ 12 Feb. 1790, *Moniteur*, iii. 355-6. ² 13 Feb. *Moniteur*, iii. 371-2.

³ 13 Oct. 1789, *Point du Jour*, iii. 351, and *Journal des Débats*, no. 66, p. 3. 19 Feb. 1790, *Moniteur*, iii. 416, and *Chronique de Paris*, 20 Feb., p. 204.

Barnave never took this view, and though neither he nor, with a few exceptions, any of the leaders of the Left had much to do with the measure, yet all were obviously heart and soul with the Ecclesiastical Committee which proposed it, and he must take his share of the responsibility.

The motives which prompted this measure have been often misunderstood. It originated with a knot of strict and pious Jansenists in the Assembly, of whom Fréteau, Camus, and Martineau were the chiefs. They were joined by Treilhard and by other religious men, including some of the clergy whose views, like theirs, were strongly Gallican, and together they determined on a thorough reform of the Church and a restoration of the usages of the primitive ages of Christianity, modified by the principles of 1789. Bishops and curés were to be elected; but not by the faithful alone, since it would be both illiberal and unconstitutional to make invidious distinctions and to create a body *ad hoc*; they must therefore be chosen by the same "electors" who chose other representatives. They were to be kept to a constant residence and a salutary poverty; the bishops' salaries were to be cut down and those of the poor curés and their *vicaires* raised. All superfluous bishoprics and benefices were to be abolished and their holders pensioned for life; logic required one bishopric and one only in each department. The new bishops were forbidden to ask the Pope to confirm their election, though they were to write to him "as to the visible chief of the Universal Church." "The intention of the Assembly is to reduce the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff within just limits; but it equally is to create no schism," said Grégoire. Each bishop and curé, before he could enter on his functions, was to take an oath "to be faithful to the nation, the law and the King, and to maintain with all his power the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the King."¹

It is impossible to read the debates without seeing that the Assembly believed itself to be acting in the true interests of an enlightened religion. Hardly any one spoke but the Jansenists and the clergy; the rest of the Assembly only looked on, as a rule, and the tone of the debates was so highly theological that

¹ A. Lameth, ii. 363-70; *Moniteur*, iv. 521, 630, 631, 639.

d'Eprémesnil asked derisively, 'if this were a Church Council or a National Assembly?'¹ Barnave came once to the help of the Ecclesiastical Committee, after an abbé had made a great impression with a proposal that the clergy should elect their bishops. It was against all principles, he said, that a corporate body should have the power of renewing itself; and he summed up the subtle argument with which the Assembly answered all objections made on the ground that it was meddling with spiritual affairs, thus: "The right of election will give the people no influence whatever over the spiritual authority. It is quite evident that this attribute can only be transmitted by those who have already received it themselves."²

In April and May the reform of the Judicature began with an important series of debates. A complete reorganization was decided on, and four chief plans engaged attention; those of Thouret, drawn up for the Constitutional Committee, Duport, Chabroud, and part of a plan by Siéyes, the whole of which was not submitted to the Assembly.³ All the reformers were agreed on the establishment of *juges de paix* (or magistrates) who were to act as arbitrators in small cases. All were also agreed that judges must be elected by the people from duly qualified candidates—so great was their distrust of the influence of the Crown. Neither was there much difference of opinion on the point that the election must not be for life but for a limited period. A bad, irremovable judge was dreaded, and it was supposed that the people could be trusted to re-elect a good one.

The chief features of Duport's plan were: the immediate establishment of juries in civil and criminal cases; the substitution of judges holding assizes for permanent tribunals; the abolition of appeals, except on legal grounds; such appeals to be made to *grands juges*, who were to have power to order

¹ A. Lameth, ii. 391; *Moniteur*, iv. 521.

² 9 June, *Moniteur*, iv. 587.

³ For Thouret's, see the *Projet* annexed to *Procès-verbal*, no. 157, vol. x; it was developed in speeches in the month of April (printed *Procès-verbal*, xv, &c.). Duport's *Principes et Plan* is annexed to *Procès-verbal* no. 244, vol. xvi; Chabroud's to no. 245, vol. xvi. Siéyes's *Aperçu d'une nouvelle organisation de la Justice et de la Police en France* was printed independently.

a new trial. Thouret provided for assizes as well as for permanent courts, but only established juries in criminal cases, for the time being. Siéyes wished for juries in both, but his juries were no juries ; they were judge and jury in one, deciding both on the verdict and on the application of the law ; moreover, they were to be composed chiefly of lawyers. His plan, which Le Chapelier, Buzot, Clermont-Tonnerre and others would have adopted simply because it was his, was demolished by Thouret and Duport, who pointed out that he had not grasped the nature of a jury.¹

Duport's plan was idealistic and involved most changes. His intention was to discourage going to law, for his experience as a judge had made him believe that it was an evil and that the lawyer's life was spiritually dangerous. "It is in general very immoral to see some individuals base their existence on the misfortunes and the injustice of their fellow-men," he said, and he held that legal chicanery destroys morality by "effacing the profound feeling of what is just and unjust which dwells in the depths of each man's heart." Only a few of his ideas were carried out. There was much opposition to juries of any kind, and the lawyers were afraid that if juries were established in civil cases the profession would be ruined. In vain Duport reminded them that "no touch of private interest has as yet stained the decrees of the National Assembly," in vain Barnave fought for Duport's plan with all his energy ; the Assembly decided that juries should be established in criminal cases only. As for assizes, the very idea of "peripatetic judges" inspired horror, and sedentary courts were voted. How would virtuous citizens, fathers of families, like to spend their lives away from home ? it was asked ; how consent to appear before the people in the character of "postillions" and "charlatans" ? as one member put it.²

Barnave took a leading part in these debates and, among other services, convinced the Assembly of the necessity of allowing an appeal in civil cases, since juries had been rejected.³

¹ By Thouret on 28 April, *Moniteur*, iv. 235 ; by Duport in *Moyens d'exécution*, &c. (annexed to his *Principes et Plan*), p. 5.

² Duport, *Principes et Plan*, 43 and 3 ; *Moniteur*, iv. 265, 266.

³ 1 May, *Moniteur*, iv. 259.

His speeches on the election and institution of judges are important. He was well aware that the system of electing judges was "open to great objection in theory and in practice," but he believed it necessary in France, especially as trial by jury was not to be established in civil cases. This meant that in all such cases the judge would not only apply the law—a function which is executive, but that he would give the verdict too—a function which is not. This being so, it would be dangerous to the liberty of the subject if the judges were under the influence of the executive power; and further, as the courts were to be numerous, the King would have the appointment of nearly three thousand judges.¹ Moved by these considerations he spoke out very strongly when there was a question of giving the King the right of selection between three candidates elected by the people. The partisans of royal prerogative hoped by this means to restore to the Crown a portion of the right of appointment which it had lost, and the debates were heated. Barnave's speech (May 6th) was one of two which, as he observes, "may have been considered anti-monarchical," but were not so in reality.² He pointed out that the question lay, not between the King and the people, but between the people and the ministers, to whom the choice would be sure to fall. In speaking of the ministers he used language which for him was unusually vehement, and the success of this speech, one of the very few vehement ones he ever made, shows the effect he could have produced had he chosen to cultivate this vein. He was answered by Cazalès in what was generally considered his best speech. Nevertheless, and in spite of the defection of "more than seventy members of the Left, led away by the opinion of M. de Laf[ayette],"³ Barnave and the popular party won the day.

Space forbids our entering further into the legal reforms of the Assembly, beyond saying that a Court of Cassation was

¹ *Introduction*, 121-3.

² *Ibid.*, 121; the other speech was on the right of making war and peace.

³ *A. N. W.* 12. Draft of letter, undated. Speech, *Moniteur*, iv, 299. It was during this speech that he was squeezed by four opponents, see p. 174.

established, also a High Court, at Orléans, to try cases of high treason, and that "the accursed gown" of the barrister, as Chabroud called it,¹ disappeared, and henceforth advocates, confounded with procureurs, were at liberty to become either "official defenders" or *avoués* as they chose.

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 258.

CHAPTER XIII

BARNAVE AND MIRABEAU

NEXT to Mirabeau, Barnave was the member of the Constituent Assembly who most attracted public attention. So says a hostile description of the Assembly by one who knew it well,¹ and contemporary documents amply confirm the statement. The relations of these two gifted men were peculiar ; they held many opinions in common, they often worked together, often supported each other in debate, and yet they stood at such opposite poles that Barnave is regarded as Mirabeau's chief opponent and would-be rival. Rival he could not be, for Mirabeau had genius, Barnave only talent, and the nature of their oratory was so different that there can be, in a way, no comparison between them. There is truth in a simile quoted with approval by Mirabeau's friend, Dumont, which likened the eloquence of the one to a trained espalier, of the other to a free-grown tree in the wind. Nevertheless, though Mirabeau with his fire, his impetuous force, his power of vivid words, his imagination, his wit, might well seem irresistible, yet, as Camille Desmoulins informs us, "five times Barnave opposed Mirabeau's opinion on great questions, and as many times the advantage remained with Barnave." Mirabeau had one great weakness ; skilful as he was in concealing ignorance, quick in gauging the temper of his audience, in seizing on essential points and letting the rest go, he was no debater. He could crush, but he could seldom refute. He would not take the trouble to get up a subject thoroughly, and if his arguments were cleverly answered he could not answer back. His days and nights were filled with so many occupations of business and

¹ *Le Véritable Portrait de nos Législateurs*, p. 36 (published at the end of 1791). (B. M. F. R. 363). It was attributed to Dubois-Crancé, probably incorrectly, as Barnave's colonial policy, with which he was in agreement, is blamed in it.

pleasure that he had no leisure for study, and though no one could speak impromptu better when roused or moved, he saved himself time and trouble by getting his friends and secretaries to write many of his speeches for him, even very important ones, only touching them up himself. He perceived his own weakness here and said one day: "I see clearly that to be able to speak impromptu on a question one must begin by understanding it well." Barnave, on the other hand, was the best debater in the Assembly; "armed with logic or dialectic," he "followed the reasoning of his antagonists step by step," and, according to Dumont, the gift was rare at the time, shared only by Maury, Clermont-Tonnerre, and Thouret.¹

Nor was this the only way in which Barnave was superior; he treated questions from a higher standpoint. We will take an instance from the account in the *Point du Jour* of the debate on the recalcitrant Parlement of Rennes, when both orators were speaking on the same side—Mirabeau, by the way, asking for a far severer sentence than Barnave. "M. Barnave", says Barère, "had stated the great principles and the higher considerations in pursuance of which the judges ought to be deprived of their offices. M. de Mirabeau . . . poured from full hands that bitter ridicule which spares nothing, on the conduct and speeches of the magistrates of Brittany; he avenged the people for the humiliating burden of ancient prejudices which their judges still tried to make them bear."² The difference of treatment is not a chance one, it is characteristic.

The feelings of Barnave and Mirabeau towards each other were a mixture of admiration and dislike. Mirabeau, says Desmoulins, hated Barnave, who always composed his own speeches, "who did not read in the tribune; but he only hated him as one hates a rival in glory and not in power. . . . Mirabeau would have loved Barnave, if Barnave had not been so often victor. His victories over Mirabeau were not all equally honourable to Barnave,³ but all

¹ Dumont, 279, 280; *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, p. 330.

² *Point du Jour*, v. 399, 9 Jan. 1790.

³ This refers to Barnave's colonial policy, of which Desmoulins disapproved

angered the vanquished man, to whom at such times passion dictated expressions which were not his real opinions." Mirabeau's hate was certainly only fitful ; from the first he was attracted by Barnave, answered his attacks by handsome compliments, and would have liked to win him over. As to Barnave's friends, he appreciated Charles Lameth's frankness and wit ; Alexandre he thought false, though he never could give Camille Desmoulins any instance of it ; Duport he detested. Yet he esteemed as well as disliked the triumvirate, and used to say in moments of intimacy : " If those people were tractable it is they whom one ought to join with." ¹ His admiration for Barnave was prettily expressed when he said " that Barnave was a tall tree which would one day become the mast of a vessel." He also made a subtle and damaging piece of criticism on Barnave's oratory : " there is no divinity in him." ² If divinity means here ' inspiration ' it is true, and the saying marks the limits of Barnave's eloquence. If we press it farther, we shall find that what appear limitations often spring from an attitude of mind to which the right and the noble seem so natural that it takes them for granted and seldom feels it necessary to appeal to them.

Barnave's admiration for Mirabeau is recorded in one of his notes : " Mirabeau was the Shakespeare of eloquence ; I imagine that no orator, ancient or modern, has surpassed the force and the beauty of his talent. He often placed a trivial pleasantry beside a sublime touch ; but when one was accustomed to his manner, his speech made an impression difficult to express. The Constituent Assembly was never tired of hearing him, and when he asked for leave to speak, it seemed from the curiosity with which all eyes were turned on him, as if it were for the first time." If genius consists in the creative spirit, Barnave thinks that Mirabeau did not possess it ; but no one was more richly endowed with the kind of genius " which makes painters," who reproduce the beautiful things they have

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, pp. 311-12.

² *Ibid.*, p. 312 ; Dumont, 248, note. I have been unable to discover the original authority for the second, widely quoted, saying. It must be genuine, and yet if it had been known to contemporaries with what glee Camille Desmoulins, to say nothing of others, would have pounced upon it !

seen. "Nature", he continues, "had given him a burning soul, his youth had been agitated by the most impetuous passions; it was easy to see that by dint of living all this had lost its freshness a little. But the feelings of what once had been, and especially the old ways of expression and the old habits remained with him; his gestures were almost always animated, his delivery was full of passionate intonations. Add to this the southern accent, which he had not entirely lost, and a habit of hyperbole and emphasis, and the result was a kind of declamation unlike any I have ever heard, except from Mademoiselle Saint-Val the elder,¹—a declamation which astonished us at first and was thought extraordinarily affected, but which acquired a great charm when one was used to it, and contributed so powerfully to the effect of his speeches, that those who heard him deliver his work on Inheritances in the Jacobins, and heard it read, after his death, by a man who nevertheless has a very good delivery,² could hardly believe it was the same."

This passage explains how it was that Mirabeau made so much impression with the speeches that were written for him.

"For the rest, his delivery and his speeches were far better when instead of reading he improvised. Several members of the Assembly had more facility than he in discussing, in linking ideas—in a word, in speaking on a question without having written anything; but where no one could touch him was when he improvised in a fit of indignation; *facit indignatio versum*. I do not think that the effect of eloquence can go further than that which he produced at Versailles when he spoke for the patriotic contribution, and at Paris when he spoke for the Marseillais."³

Barnave's early antagonism to Mirabeau, often foolishly ascribed to jealousy, sprang from his repugnance to Mirabeau's insincerity. All right-feeling men were shocked by Mirabeau's many and various immoralities, but the code of the Revolution was not strait-laced and the repentant sinner was welcomed back to the path of virtue. Mirabeau too, more than any man,

¹ A contemporary tragic actress, considered by many the best of her time.

² Talleyrand.

³ *Œuvres*, ii. 64-6.

had excuses for his vices in the unhappy circumstances of his life, and more than any man he had that quality of loveliness in his nature which compels the pure and the upright to forgive excesses and shady dealings. He was wont to weep over the sins of his youth which had ruined his influence, yet one cannot but believe that if he had been perfectly straightforward and open, the sins of his youth would have been forgotten. He wept, but he went on sinning ; he added to his doubtful reputation ; he was always playing some secret game of his own, and his colleagues suspected it though they seldom knew what the game was. He played at the same time for popular favour and for Court favour, and much of what he said and did was said and done with ulterior motives. He deceived with effrontery and with what is more effective than effrontery, with conviction. He threw himself so heartily into the attitude of the moment that it became for him at the time his real one. He shares this quality with another sincere and therefore effective deceiver of a very different calibre, Louis XVI. Louis XVI was anything but machiavellian ; it would appear that he really meant first one thing and then its opposite, making no effort to co-ordinate ideas in his mind ; Mirabeau deliberately intended to be machiavellian, but his nobler impulses often carried him away and, as Quinet, who has judged him better than any one else, says, he ended by being two men. One was truly revolutionary and patriotic ; the other, almost diabolically cynical, believed that the Revolution could be guided and ruled by a policy of treachery, cunning, and deceit.¹ His venality has often been exaggerated ; he took money from the Court, yet he was in reality "paid not bought," as he said himself, and the easy explanation of bribery will not account for any of his actions. But it would be difficult to exaggerate his insincerity.

Barnave put truth above all other virtues and carried candour to what some might think an excess in a public man. If he thought he had been in the wrong he said so, neither defending himself nor explaining it away. Thus on one occasion when the law for regulating elections was being discussed, he actually spoke on two sides during the same debate. He had opposed

¹ See Quinet, i. 209-23.

the Constitutional Committee on a certain article; the arguments brought forward convinced him of his error, and he then spoke in favour of the Committee's proposal, acknowledging that he had been mistaken, and saying "that it was never too late to return to the truth."¹ It was his abhorrence of falsehood which made him so bitter with Mirabeau. When he refutes other speakers he does it politely, in a manner that takes away all personal sting; and if in one report of a speech he seems brusque (all the reports of 1789 and 1790 condense speeches), we always find in another that this was not the case. But with Mirabeau he was acrimonious, as will be illustrated by the history of their earlier relations.

We have spoken of his attack on Mirabeau on June 15th. Again, in September, he began his speech on the suspensory veto by refuting Mirabeau with "a touch of bitterness," which Gorsas, who records it, puts down to the very motive to which we have ascribed it.² On October 5th there was a brush between the two orators which electrified those who imagined them to be hand in glove. Mirabeau, after hurling defiance at the Queen and thereby gaining revolutionary kudos, thought it a favourable moment, when the Assembly must be feeling sure of his principles, to criticize the Declaration of Rights; with the view of persuading his colleagues to forbear insisting upon its acceptance by the King. Doubtless he meant this to be a first step towards getting the Declaration rescinded. He called it a "philosophical work," "perhaps fundamentally bad." His plan was frustrated by Barnave, who sprang up in great indignation, crying to the president to call to order the member who dared to tell the Assembly that its work was fundamentally bad. Mirabeau replied with a soft answer that was no answer. Barnave, he said, had formerly criticized parts of the Declaration. "He recalled to M. Barnave's memory the excellent speech in which he himself had pointed out the vices of Article X of this Declaration, concerning religious opinions." The example was not applicable, because Barnave's speech had been made while the article was still under discussion.³

¹ 17 Nov. 1789, *Point du Jour*, iv. 196.

² 2 Sept. 1789, Gorsas, iii. 91.

³ Duquesnoy, i. 400; *Courrier de Provence*, no. 50, p. 17; *Journal de*

After the 5th October, and before the Assembly left Versailles, there was a sort of rapprochement. Mirabeau had announced his intention of attacking Lafayette, on the manner in which he had forced the duc d'Orléans to leave the kingdom, and such an attack would have led to open dissensions and divisions. In the hope of avoiding them a meeting was arranged at Passy, at the house of Mirabeau's niece, between Mirabeau and Lafayette with his inseparable Latour-Maubourg; and Barnave, Duport, Alexandre Lameth, and Laborde were called in as conciliators. It was probably the first time that most of them had met Mirabeau in private, and Mirabeau, who was fond of making himself out worse than he was, could not resist the temptation of shocking good young men. He told them stories of the elections in Provence; how he had made arrangements to have a certain orator, whom he employed and distrusted, stabbed, if he played him false; and to their horrified exclamations about assassination, replied carelessly: "Oh! in revolutions the lesser morality kills the greater." Lafayette intimated that the Queen must not be attacked and Mirabeau assented, with the remark that 'a humbled Queen might be of some use; the only use of a slaughtered one was for poor Guibert to write a bad tragedy on.'

When the conference proceeded to talk business, however, all went smoothly enough. Every one agreed that a new ministry was indispensable. The harmless pastime of choosing a ministry was much in vogue at this time, and Lafayette in particular used to talk as though he could make and unmake ministers at will. On this occasion a ministry was chosen from members of the Assembly, those present being ruled out. The company was also unanimous on the importance of having men friendly to the Revolution for ambassadors, governors, &c., instead of the present hostile occupants of such posts, and Lafayette undertook to urge upon the King that all new appointments must be made with this object. Nothing came of these plans,¹ for Lafayette's influence with the Court was not so great as he imagined.

Paris, 8 Oct., p. 1289. I have not been able to find any report of the speech referred to.

¹ A. Lameth, i. 181-5; Lafayette, ii. 363-4. Cf. Montlosier, 43-4.

Mirabeau had set his heart upon being a minister, and as he wanted Lafayette's support he continued to negotiate with him, and tried to prejudice him against Barnave and his friends by saying unpleasant things of them. The Archbishop of Bordeaux, keeper of the Seals, was mixed up in these negotiations, which were complicated by the fact that Mirabeau was in money difficulties, and that Lafayette could dispose of large sums from the King's Treasury. Mirabeau was negotiating with Monsieur the King's brother, at the same time, and composed for him a memorandum, intended for the Court, which contained advice that was the blackest treachery to the Assembly.¹ Nothing came of this, his first attempt to become the counsellor of King and Queen.

He would have found it useless to be a minister unless he could still sway the Assembly by his oratory, and in order to do this he must be able to speak when he chose, and must not be confined, as the present ministers were, to making statements. He began to prepare the way on Nov. 6th, by proposing, after an attack on Necker, that ministers should be invited to sit in the Assembly, with power to speak but not to vote. The proposal was criticized, defended, and adjourned. But the Archbishop of Bordeaux had been letting members know about Mirabeau's secret ambitions, and a storm was brewing. The matter was talked over in the Jacobins that same evening, and on the 7th, Lanjuinais and another fiery patriot, Blin, who are said to have been influenced by the Archbishop's disclosures, attacked the proposal and carried a motion that no member of the Assembly should be allowed to become a minister while the session lasted. Barnave and his friends shared the general feeling that the men who were making the Constitution stood in a peculiar position and were wise in debarring themselves from accepting the prizes of public life, but they took no special part in bringing about Mirabeau's discomfiture, as has been erroneously stated.²

¹ Lafayette, ii. 413; Lamarck, i. 364-82 (the memorandum).

² e. g. by Dumont, 198-9. See Lafayette, ii. 370; A. Lameth, i. 241, note; Montlosier, 57-8; Duquesnoy, ii. 22, &c., also Beaumez, on 15 Aug. 1791, *Le Hodey*, xxxi. pp. 498-9.

For two of Barnave's encounters with Mirabeau, Mirabeau's complaisance towards his Genevese advisers was responsible. We have spoken of the little band who worked for the great man: Dumont, Duroveray, Clavière, and, later, Reybaz. Mirabeau called them his *atelier*, and found them indispensable. Their presence added to the distrust he inspired, for Dumont and Duroveray had lived in England, and Genevese publicists were suspected of furthering the interests of the British Government, if not of being actually in its pay. The Genevese had not succeeded in preserving unity in their own small country, but they had made what Alexandre Lameth calls "an industry" of spreading Genevese ideas through Europe by supplying the young nobility with tutors carefully educated for the purpose, and their reputation as political experts stood high.¹ The ablest men flew at loftier game than tutorships, and, if Dumont is to be credited, Duroveray had meddled in the Revolution to some purpose, for he had initiated the idea of the Royal Sitting of June 23rd, without telling Mirabeau, and he had suggested to Mirabeau the *loi martiale*.

Now Barnave was French of the French: pure French by descent, in thought and in speech; he had none of the cosmopolitanism of some of the revolutionaries, and he could not stomach these outsiders, with their airs of superiority and their uncalled-for interference. At Versailles he lodged in the same house as Dumont and Duroveray, who occupied the ground floor. "I could never have made friends with him," says Dumont, "even if he had not been of the Lameth faction, Mirabeau's enemies. He had an irritable self-love, a jealous and angry look, a revolting presumption."² It is evident that Barnave used to pass the Genevese with his head in the air and a face too expressive of his feelings.

In the first of the two encounters the Genevese won. It was in October, and the qualifications for active citizenship were under discussion. Mirabeau, in a speech composed for him by Duroveray, suddenly proposed that not only should bankrupts be ineligible, but also their children, until they had paid their share of their father's debts. Such a law, said

¹ A. Lameth, ii. 210, note.

² Dumont, 247-8.

Mirabeau, would raise the morals of the nation, and although it was drawn from the code of a small republic, Geneva, was eminently suited to France. Barnave, who was his chief antagonist, refuted him completely ; but the idea appealed to the morality of the Assembly, and the article passed.¹ When the Constitution was revised it was rescinded.

In the next conflict Barnave was victor. Dumont, when reading Rousseau, had been struck with his system of "gradual elections," a system by which men passed in succession from one public office to another ; usual in Republics, but only made obligatory "in Rome and Geneva." Dumont saw that this was just what was wanted in France, and he expounded the idea to Mirabeau, who embraced it eagerly and proposed the system to the Assembly on Dec. 10th, in a speech which Dumont had written for the occasion.² No one was to be eligible to the departmental assemblies unless he had been a member of a municipality or of a district assembly ; and no one was to be eligible to the National Assembly unless he had served at least twice in one of the subordinate assemblies, or had held a judicial office for three years, or had already been a deputy. The law, inexecutable at present, was not to come into operation for eight or ten years.

The speech was weighted with an appeal to the authority of Rousseau and the example of Rome, always powerful with the Assembly. Geneva was left out this time, perhaps because Romilly had been writing to warn Dumont against "dinning it in the ears of the French."³ All that could be said in favour of the proposal was brought forward. Anything which promoted morality, said Mirabeau, had always been welcomed by the Assembly, and a law such as this, doing away with the advantages of birth and position which too often enabled the fortunate to secure their elections, would enforce the great principle of equality. Everyone, before attaining to the highest dignities, would have to pass through an apprenticeship ; and what could be more necessary than a training for the

¹ 27 and 28 Oct., *Courrier de Provence*, no. 58, pp. 9-12, and no. 59, pp. 2-3 ; *Le Hodey*, v. 231-2 ; Dumont, 200.

² Dumont, 238-9.

³ Romilly, i. 378.

most difficult art in the world, that of government? And not only would members of the legislature come to their task well prepared; they would always be the right kind of men, since they would have no chance of being chosen unless they were men of talent and integrity, who had won and kept the confidence of their fellow citizens. The well-to-do youth of the community would be saved from frivolity and degeneracy, for if they wished for distinction in later life, they must devote themselves betimes to cultivating a good reputation. A lustre, too, would be shed over the minor administrative assemblies as steps in the great ladder, and the best men would be eager to serve in them; no service could be thought contemptible or irksome when all public functions were bound together in fraternity. The representatives of the nation would thus pass from step to step, always under the public eye, always growing in wisdom and in worth; corruption and popular caprice would be eliminated from elections; the provinces would be quieter, the sovereign decrees would be more respected and "moral opinion" would give them their greatest force.¹

The Assembly listened with the deep attention it always gave to something new and important, and at first both Right and Left appeared to be captivated, but when Mirabeau began to read his bill there were murmurs, and he had hardly left the tribune before Barnave was in it. Barnave evidently thought that Mirabeau had some underhand object in proposing such a measure, and his words were very bitter.

"If," he began, "to annihilate the Constitution at a single blow, it were enough to wrap principles the most contrary to the Declaration of Rights and to our decrees in a few moral ideas and a little display of erudition, the previous speaker² might hope to produce an impression on you. But fortunately he has inured you to the seductions of his eloquence, and several times we have had occasion to search for reason and the public good behind the graceful touches with which he has embellished his speeches. A similar occasion, and a more startling one, is before us to-day." Then, in an extremely able speech, he demolished Mirabeau's plausibilities. He pointed out that the

¹ *Courrier de Provence*, no. 77, pp. 10-22.

² This was the correct form.

system was contrary to the spirit of any free Constitution, because instead of distributing public functions amongst as many citizens as possible, it tended to concentrate them all among a few. That it was a mistake to suppose all men to be equally fitted for the same functions. That by practically raising the age of eligibility to the legislature to about thirty-five, it would exclude young men from a large assembly where all kinds of talent and all stamps of character were needed, and where they would be a useful element, and would turn them into small administrative assemblies where their immaturity might do real mischief. That under a specious appearance of popularizing all offices the measure would keep the people out of all, and would fill them with the rich, who would alone have leisure to devote so many years to administrative work. That men with experience of life, soldiers, business men, students, who would bring fresh ideas and would come into the National Assembly free from the petty interests and prejudices of public life, would become ineligible; while, from the necessity of electing the same persons over and over again, the government of the country would fall into the hands of a large clique, and the National Assembly, fed only from lower assemblies, would cease to be independent and would join with these bodies in stifling the complaints of the people. He concluded by proposing that, as M. de Mirabeau himself confessed that his law could not come into force for eight or ten years, it should be adjourned to the next National Convention, which would probably be held about that time.¹

Mirabeau would have liked to answer, but, says Dumont, all he knew about the question was contained in his speech, and he had not even assimilated this enough to reproduce it in a different form as a reply. He had to content himself with a retort, meant to be crushing, and an exit. "The previous speaker", he said, "seems to forget that if rhetoricians speak for the next twenty-four hours, legislators speak for posterity. I ask leave to reply to him, but as I am called to the Committee of Ten² I must leave the Assembly to go where I have been

¹ *Courrier de Provence*, no. 77, pp. 23-6. Barnave wrote this report of his speech himself for this journal, as he did on other occasions.

² A branch of the Finance Committee.

sent by its orders, and I beg that the question may be adjourned.”¹

The motion was accordingly adjourned, but Barnave had killed it. Mirabeau tried to get up the subject and Dumont wrote him another speech;² but he did not have an opportunity of delivering it. On the 15th, when his motion came up again, an adjournment was proposed; it was supported by Left and Right, by Duport and Mirabeau Tonneau. Mirabeau, being thus only able to speak against the adjournment, did the best he could, with the help of one of his most audacious falsehoods. “When”, he said, “I saw an opponent mount the tribune to attack, impromptu and with a facility which I admired as much as was in me, a motion to which I was conscious that long meditations had been given, a motion which was supported by the opinion of Rousseau—that is to say, of the man who reflected more deeply than any other upon human affairs—I need only have repeated myself in order to answer him.” He then divagated to the point that this was the first time that legislators were to be forbidden to make laws for the future, and finally asked for an adjournment to a fixed date, that he might make his reply. But the Assembly adjourned the question indefinitely, and Dumont had to be satisfied with answering Barnave in the *Courrier de Provence*.³

The idea of “gradual elections” had pleased, and many deputies continued to regret that it had not been adopted, but it never came into practical politics again. It is hardly possible that a man of Mirabeau’s intellect continued to believe in it.

The history of the most important fight between Barnave and Mirabeau will be told in another chapter.

¹ Dumont, 240; *Courrier de Provence*, no. 77, p. 26. Mirabeau’s retort seems to be mentioned only in the *Courrier de Provence* and the *Moniteur* of 12 Dec. (reproduced in the reprint).

² See the fifth facsimile letter at the end of Dumont.

³ *Courrier de Provence*, no. 79, pp. 7-9; Dumont, 241.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE JACOBINS

THE founding of the Jacobin Club was one of the events of the autumn of 1789. The institution sprang up naturally as a continuation of the first club of the advanced Left. "I was one of the deputies," Barnave writes, "who reconstituted, under the name of 'Society of the Friends of the Constitution', the club which had borne at Versailles the name of 'Club Breton'; a society which has become famous and powerful through its numerous affiliations, which incontestably contributed to give a wise direction to the Revolution, but which has since served as an instrument to all those who have wished to prolong it." For nearly eighteen months the influence of Barnave and his friends preponderated in the club, and during that time they were frequently designated as "the leaders of the Jacobins," or "the directoire of the Jacobins."¹

The society acquired its name from its meeting-place in the Jacobin convent on the north side of the rue St. Honoré, just east of the church of St. Roch and close to the Manège. It was formed in November, as a club for deputies only, and it was at first called the "Société de la Révolution"; we learn from a letter of Mirabeau's that rules were being discussed and the admission of strangers voted one day between Dec. 10th and 15th.² Meetings were held on the four evenings of the week

¹ *Introduction*, 118. M. Aulard's work on the Jacobins, a collection of contemporary printed documents (nearly all of which may be found in the British Museum), is of course the authority, but there are many notices of early sittings not mentioned there. Two members with bad memories, Dubois-Crancé in his *Analyse de la Révolution française*, p. 51 (Paris, 1885), and La Revellière-Lépeaux (*Mémoires*, i. 85), give accounts of the foundation which are of small value. Alexandre Lameth's (i. 422) is better, but he is inaccurate on many points. The "Directoire" were supposed to meet in the "rue basse du Rempart." Duquesnoy, ii. 467.

² See the fifth facsimile letter (undated) at the end of Dumont. "I return you, my dear Dumont, the Barnave polemic. It did not come

when, as a rule, the Assembly did not sit ; Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Early in February the name was changed to "*Société des Amis de la Constitution*," and rules were adopted and printed on Feb. 8th. Barnave was the reporter of the committee which drew them up ; the preamble which explains the objects of the society is entirely his, and drafts of it exist among his papers.¹ This hopeful, open, kindly document is in striking contrast with the ordinary idea of the Jacobins and their policy.

It begins thus : " As soon as the first debates of the National Assembly had enabled all the deputies to judge reciprocally of the principles by which each was guided, those who believed themselves to be inspired by a particularly ardent zeal for the rights of men began to meet together, and formed among themselves a society based upon esteem and confidence. To the pleasure which is found in talking without restraint to men who profess the same opinions as oneself and are united by the same duties, was added the advantage of taking to the National Assembly minds prepared by discussion and fortified against all kinds of surprises. Since its removal to the capital the utility of such conversations has been more and more felt." A larger number of deputies desired to take part in these discussions, and other citizens asked for and obtained admission ; deputies sent by the big towns to follow the doings of the Assembly, and private persons who had done useful work which they submitted to the society. Patriotic associations, too, in several towns, wished to be affiliated.

" In these days, critical for the monarchy, when we are surrounded by obstacles placed in the way of our liberty by men whose pretensions liberty has overthrown, it seemed to the members of the society that everything which tends to unite those who love the Constitution ought to be welcomed as valuable. They believed that in these associations they saw a means of establishing among good citizens an uniformity up at the *Société de la Révolution*, which was only dealing with home affairs, and by the way the admission of strangers was voted." The rest of the letter shows that the polemic was in answer to Barnave's speech of 10 Dec. (see last chapter) on a subject which was shelved on the 15th.

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. The earlier drafts are in Barnave's hand, the later corrected by him. Alexandre Lameth gives it to Barnave (i. 422).

of wishes, of principles and of conduct which will consummate the blessed revolution they all desire in the quickest and most peaceable manner." A knowledge of the Constitution will be diffused through the kingdom and the well-disposed will be able to allay "with calm and reassuring words" panics which have been purposely raised.

"Thus these societies, formed by enthusiasm for the public good and for the political discussion which has at all times been the delight of free peoples, are necessary to-day to further the dearest interests of our country. For the sake of its liberty and its tranquillity it is urgent that we should unite good citizens in intimate correspondence; and if it still has enemies, everything, including a wish to spare them, will invite us to oppose their efforts by a combination so powerful that they will lose hope, and will cease attempting to trouble our country when they find that nothing comes of it but danger to themselves."

The parent society will receive information from the affiliated clubs and will make its views known to them. "Above all, it will explain to them the meaning of the decrees of the National Assembly, to the execution of which all these societies will be especially devoted. As they are intended to spread truth and to defend liberty and the Constitution, their methods will be as pure as the object they have in view; publicity will be the guarantee of everything they do. To write and speak openly, to profess their principles without evasion, to own their actions, their views, their hopes—frankness of conduct such as this will be the means they will employ in endeavouring to win that public esteem which alone can make them strong and useful.

"Fidelity to the Constitution, devotion in defending it, respect for and submission to the authorities it establishes, will be the first rules imposed on those who wish to be admitted to these societies. Higher than all other claims will stand the love of equality, and that profound feeling for the rights of men which devotes itself to the defence of the weak and the oppressed by instinct, and feels its own dignity enough to honour fellow-man, independently of further distinctions and titles."¹

¹ *Actes des Apôtres*, no. 73, p. 6, &c., where the rules are reproduced from the Jacobin circular. Aulard, *Jacobins*, I. xxviii-ix.

A few simple rules followed. A president and secretaries were elected monthly (apparently they were chosen at the last sitting of the month), and the rules of the National Assembly were followed in debate. Strangers were admitted on the recommendation of five members, after their names had been posted up during two sittings; if objections were made a vote was taken.¹ One rule stated that the freedom of deputies in the National Assembly was in no way circumscribed by what took place in the club.²

Publicity was always a feature, and the Club was "very public, perhaps more so than the sittings of the Assembly itself," writes Duquesnoy in January.³ Its motto was the famous "Vivre libre ou mourir," which appeared upon its papers, printed within a wreath, and was sometimes worn by members on their buttons.

The subjects discussed were the great questions of the hour as they came into practical politics, and Camille Desmoulins calls the sittings the "rehearsal" for the National Assembly. "There motions are proposed and discussed, decrees are drawn up, the president and secretaries of the National Assembly and the members of the different committees are chosen; and as they have the majority, all they have decided on the day before is a settled and decreed thing."⁴ This is saying too much, for though the Jacobins concentrated the votes of their members by these discussions, and though after the preliminary ballot in the club they came to an agreement on the candidates they would nominate, they did not always get them elected, any more than they always succeeded in passing their bills.

The minutes of the society have never been found, and until June 1791, when a journal was started for the purpose, the sittings were not officially reported. We have therefore only chance notices in the newspapers and the publications of the club to go upon. Even the early presidents are not all known.

¹ In January Arthur Young was admitted at once, with little formality (A. Young, 305). In June Barnave writes (*Œuvres*, iv. 338) that thirty commissioners report on candidates.

² Rule, xiv.

³ Duquesnoy, ii. 298.

⁴ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 10, p. 438 (probable date 1 Feb. 1790).

The president was always a deputy ; Lameth says that Menou was the first, and we know for certain that d'Aiguillon was president in February, Charles Lameth in March, Robespierre in April, Barnave in June ; and after him, from July to December, Noailles, Pétion, Dubois-Crancé, Duport, Chabroud and Mirabeau.¹ Barnave tells the Patriotic Society of Grenoble in June 1790, that there are from 1,200 to 1,300 members, of whom more than 360 are deputies, and that there are affiliated societies in nearly all the important towns of the kingdom. From four to five hundred members are usually present at meetings, and the deputies who belong attend regularly, only staying away when they are engaged on committees. The outside members consist of "a large number of rich and respectable men and a much larger number of men celebrated for their knowledge and their talents," also of "patriots, from whom nothing more has been required than a consistent conduct in the Revolution and a zeal enlightened enough for them to be interested and to take part in the political discussions which are the sole business of the society."²

In the incomplete list of members published at the end of 1790, are men of many professions : authors, as La Harpe, M. J. Chénier, Chamfort, and Fabre d'Églantine ; painters, as David ; officers, military and naval, as Mathieu Dumas, Kersaint, and Rochambeau, son of the Marshal ; actors, as Larive and Talma ; journalists, as Loustallot, Le Hodey, Carra, Gorsas, and Brune, the future Marshal ; professors, as Noël, who was also a journalist ; doctors, as Cabanis ; business men, as Baudouin, the printer, and Bréguet, the watchmaker.³

¹ See Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. lxxix ; Duquesnoy, ii. 468 ; *Bulletin des Jacobins*, p. 7 (28 avril 1790), (B. M. R. 366) ; *Gazette de Paris*, 31 Aug. 1790, p. 4.

² Barnave's letter, Paris, 25 June 1790, is printed by Béranger from a draft among his papers (*Œuvres*, iv. 333-42). The full letter, addressed to the Patriotic Society of Grenoble, and dated 30 June, was discovered by M. de Beylié in the Grenoble Archives, and printed in the *Bulletin historique et philologique*, 1899, p. 410, &c. I refer to this as "*Lettre*." *Œuvres*, iv. 337-8, *Lettre* 412.

³ I suppose so, as George III refused to have a Bréguet watch because the maker was a Jacobin. The list will be found Aulard, *Jacobins*, I. xxxiii. &c.

There are many names destined to become known in the Revolution, such as Clavière, Legendre, Anacharsis Cloots, Tallien, Manuel, Lulier, Paris (clerk of the Revolutionary Tribunal), Léonard Bourdon, Collot d'Herbois, and Billaud Varennes. All of these, even those who afterwards became infamous, had some qualities to recommend them, but there is nothing to be said for the admission of two members: Fréron, whose paper *L'Orateur du Peuple* was always detestable, and the abbé d'Espagnac, notorious for speculating in the funds, who held forth to the club on financial matters.

We have left to the last two men of genius with whom the Lameths and Barnave were on very friendly terms, Danton and Camille Desmoulins. Danton, with his eloquence and his voice of thunder—"the strongest voice I ever heard," says Barnave—was always an important member. We find him denouncing ministers in characteristic fashion on May 30th, and being both called to order and applauded.¹ It was not till later that he became a firebrand in the club; in the early days he seconded efforts towards peace and union, and Alexandre Lameth's verdict on him is, that though unscrupulous as to how he obtained power he meant to make a good use of it.

Of Camille, Lameth says that he had "a bad head and a good heart,"² and there was that about him which would have made any one glad to be his friend, full of faults as he was, fickle, and sometimes cruel. He was the journalist to whom nothing is sacred; he turned everything into "copy," even the wife he loved, and one forgives him all, or nearly all, for the exquisite lightness of his touch, the classic sting of his satire, the haunting cadences of his eloquence. His writings are journalism pure and simple, but immortal journalism, and his pages are as much alive to-day as on the day they were written. There is more true wit in one of his numbers than in all the boasted productions of the aristocrats put together. Robespierre and Pétion were his idols, for Mirabeau his affection was strong; he was never an adherent of Barnave and the Lameths, his political opinions were not theirs and he criticized while he admired. But he believed

¹ Barnave, *Œuvres*, iii. 317; *Courrier extraordinaire*, 1 June 1790, p. 6.

² A. Lameth, i. 428.

in them and liked them, and used to look in on them in a friendly way and scold them when they had let the Assembly pass bad decrees.¹

The Jacobin convent belonged in 1789 to the Dominicans, who let out rooms, and the friendly brothers used to attend the early meetings, which were held in the chapter-house. The club soon outgrew the chapter-house and rented instead the library, over the convent chapel. This chapel, an unpretentious, rectangular edifice, not unlike a Protestant place of worship on the outside, stood by itself in the big convent court. The library, its top story, was a large, rather low room, with a wagon roof and windows in recesses on either side. Along the walls were book-cases, carefully nailed up, and for ornament there were pictures, probably frescoes; St. Thomas Aquinas presiding over the fountain of knowledge at one end, and illustrious Dominicans between the windows. The President sat in the middle of one side, with the tribune opposite. The benches, which rose in tiers, were unstuffed and, uncomfortable and the lighting was bad.² There was no gallery and little room for visitors, and women were never admitted while Barnave and his friends were in power.³

The meetings, which began at six and lasted till ten or eleven, opened with the reading of correspondence, all of which had passed through the hands of a committee; Barnave was a member of this body. Deputations who came to present their respects and congratulations, or to make complaints, were next received and answered. Then, unless something more urgent superseded it, came "the order of the day". To give examples: in February the Colonial question was discussed; in March Duport read his plan of judicial reform and it was still on the tapis in April; in April and May came the right of making war, and ministerial responsibility;

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, p. 311.

² Aulard, *Jacobins*, I. xxii, &c. (he quotes from Millin's *Antiquités nationales*, vol. i, fasc. 4, p. 54, &c.); Halem, pt. ii. 71-2.

³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 64, p. 559 and *Discours imprimés par ordre de la Société Fraternelle de Patriotes*, p. 5. There Chabroud, the President, tells this Society on 21 Nov. 1790, that the Jacobins regret they can admit no women on a deputation, from important considerations.

in July and August, the Court of Cassation and the Spanish alliance ; in August and September, assignats.¹

On these and similar subjects long papers were read and long speeches, often of an inferior quality, were delivered. Deputies read the motions they were about to make in the Manège, and there was always a chance of hearing the stars of the Assembly speak. But Biauza, who was dully prudent, and Carra, who was idiotically denunciatory, had to be listened to as well as Barnave and Danton, and they or their like spoke a great deal oftener. There were exciting moments when burning questions were in hand, but at this early period the main part of the proceedings was not only serious and intellectual, but quiet. Enthusiasm carried the Jacobins through many an evening that would have been tedious if politics had not been so new and so absorbing.

The decisive actions of the Jacobins in their first year were pacific. Three circulars to the affiliated societies were issued. The first, in September, when there was much mutinous disorder in the army, called upon the local clubs to do all in their power to persuade the troops in their neighbourhood to keep quiet and to discharge their duties faithfully ; Alexandre Lameth wrote this. In October there were two : one giving good advice on the choice of judges ; the other, by Victor Broglie, on the necessity of pressing the people to pay their taxes punctually.² We will mention two instances of the way in which the club acted on its members. In April, when feelings ran high over the sale of clerical property, members who were deputies were asked to go early to the debate in the Assembly, to keep as calm as possible, and while avoiding "injustice and the terrible evils of intolerance," so to vote that "the respect due to the religion of our fathers should be maintained."³ In June a resolution was passed, proposed by Noailles and seconded by Charles Lameth and Laborde, making it obligatory on members to use articles of French manufacture only. Barnave had spoken of this idea in the Assembly,

¹ See Aulard, *Jacobins*, i ; *Bulletin des Jacobins* (the only number) ; *Orateur du Peuple*, ii. 363.

² *Moniteur*, v. 647 ; Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 322, 338.

³ Gaultier-Biauza, ii. 310.

some time before, as a voluntary way of encouraging native industries in which the French might well imitate the English.¹

In the early months of the second year the club continued, as a rule, to follow the same lines, and we will give two instances of actions with which Barnave is specially connected.

In February 1791 (9th) the Assembly abolished the octroi at town gates, but only from the following May 1st, up to which time it was to remain in force. It was feared that the enemies of the Revolution would mislead the people into refusing further payment and that riots would result, and the Jacobins did their best to avert the catastrophe. On a motion of Duport's (Feb. 20th) they invited the Sections of Paris to pass resolutions on the subject, and at the same time they sent a deputation of four to a poor club with which they were on excellent terms, the Société Fraternelle, a gathering of enthusiastic patriots of both sexes, who met in the chapel underneath the library, to study the Constitution by the light of one candle. The object of the deputation was to ask this society to be vigilant in seeing that the tax was paid, and Barnave, who was spokesman, appealed successfully to the honour of Paris, so prompt to show her mind when great national interests were concerned, so calm and moderate over the suppression of the octroi, which touched her own interests. He also roused the emulation of his hearers by telling them how Cazalès had ventured to say that he would answer for the tax not being paid.²

Paris on this occasion gave a signal example of obedience to the law, and the Jacobins plumed themselves on the part

¹ Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 136 and *Chronique*, 5 June, 621-2. Barnave on 18 Jan.; *Le Hodey*, vii. 423.

² *Mercur national*, 25 Feb. 1791, pp. 147-9. It is a specimen of the way the Jacobins were traduced, that the English Jacobin, W. A. Miles, who accompanied this deputation, out of curiosity to see what he calls "the club of female Jacobins," says no word of its object, representing it as a complimentary visit, and writes that Barnave, "in the most abject manner . . . concluded a fulsome address to the rabble, the *refuse* even of all that is infamous," saying, "Your will is our duty, we have no other," &c. (W. A. Miles, *Correspondence*, i. 230). The Société Fraternelle was not even extreme at this time, and was reproved by a sister society, probably jealous, for "fawning upon" the deputies who used to visit it (*Mercur national*, loc. cit., 149).

they had taken in securing it. Again, on March 28th, when the massing of Austrian troops at Porentruy, near the frontier, was spreading alarm along the border, the club sent a circular, which surely Barnave must have drawn up, to affiliated societies in the districts concerned, instructing them to persuade the inhabitants that the matter must be left to politicians to settle, "to enlighten" them "on the necessity of respecting foreign territory" . . . "and above all to make them feel that the least hostility, the slightest affray between French citizens and soldiers or inhabitants of foreign and frontier soil, might give our enemies a pretext for war, which they no doubt are seeking, and which a number of powerful interests ought to make us avoid."¹

The popular idea of the Jacobins is that they existed to denounce, and the aristocrats fastened this label on them from the first. We have seen that it is an incorrect one, but it is true that one side of the Jacobins' work was concerned with denunciation; not merely with the ordinary political attacks on ministers and Government, but with complaints against lesser authorities. Great social reforms cannot be carried out against the opposition of the rich and the powerful unless there is some machinery for calling attention to the delinquencies of those who are evading the law. Such a machinery was supplied by the Jacobins. They did not as yet listen to unfounded and vexatious denunciations. Thus, in June 1790 the club refused to take notice of complaints about the insults which the royal household were said to have put upon National Guards at St. Cloud; and in November Fréron, who pompously announced a great, new conspiracy and implicated Lafayette, was hissed by every one.²

At the end of October 1790 the Jacobins decided to publish a journal, and the first number of a weekly paper, called *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, appeared on Nov. 30th. The editor whom they fixed upon was Choderlos de Laclos,

¹ *Journal général*, par Fontenai, 27 March, p. 221, and 18 April, p. 309.

² *Courrier extraordinaire*, 8 June 1790, pp. 5-6; *Orateur du Peuple*, iii. 390. Fréron does not say that he was hissed, but an anonymous pamphlet cites it as an instance of Jacobin craft. *Grand Combat des Démagogues avec la Vérité* (n. d., 16 pp.), pp. 13-14 (B. M. R. 157).

confidential secretary of the duc d'Orléans, a puzzling choice. It would seem to indicate a sort of rapprochement with d'Orléans, of which there are no other signs, but possibly it was prompted by a wish to hold out a friendly hand after the Châtelet affair. The Duke's adherents frequented the Jacobins, and his young son, the duc de Chartres, joined the club in November, but they made no party there. Laclos was an unfortunate selection; he looked like a conspirator and he had written, many years before, a notorious novel, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. Michelet has made his appointment the subject of a diatribe, but Laclos must be acquitted of the chief charges Michelet brings against him. His biographer, M. Dard, has shown convincingly that he was an able and embittered man who wrote his book as a covert satire on the immorality of the Ancien Régime, and that, though wild in youth, he was a respectable citizen and a devoted husband and father in his Jacobin days.¹ Neither did he use the journal to propagate Orléanism. But his name did not inspire confidence and he was a bad editor; nothing can be duller than his paper. Its object was to expound the Constitution, and each week there were heavy articles on what the National Assembly had done, what it was doing, and what remained for it to do. There were a few reviews and letters and a scrappy *Variétés* about the events of the day, but there was no account of the sittings of the club, except in so far as the correspondence with affiliated societies was concerned. A short résumé of this was given, drawn up briefly and dryly, with quotations from letters. This is the part which Michelet describes as "incendiary," as calculated to draw down the hatred of the people on the heads of priests and nobles, as a terrible weapon of delation. This is not the fact. It is true that the quotations given are sometimes violent, but the whole is arranged in a condensed, business-like manner which seems to take the sting out of violence, and no approval of it is ever shown, the sparse editorial comments being both moderate and sensible.² Fanatical Jacobins must have been hard up indeed

¹ *Un Acteur caché du Drame Révolutionnaire. Le Général Choderlos de Laclos*. E. Dard (Paris, 1905). Michelet, Livre iv. Chap. V.

² e.g., in Feb. 1791 the Society of Souillac denounced certain

if they had to seek encouragement here, and one can only imagine country societies studying the "correspondence" to see if their own communications had been properly reported. It was not Laclos, but the journalist G. B. Feydel who did this part of the paper, at least if we may believe him when, in one of the last numbers he signs himself "sole editor of the correspondence of the journal, from No. 1 to the present number."¹

Other clubs besides the Jacobins were founded by deputies. The Right began to meet in the Augustin convent soon after the move to Paris, and in December deputed Malouet, who had not joined them, to negotiate with Lafayette, la Rochefoucauld, and their friends, for the formation of a sort of half-way club. Lafayette and la Rochefoucauld would not come in, but Malouet and his party started the club called the "Impartials." It was supposed to hold the balance, but ended, as is the way with impartiality, by voting with the Right.²

In March 1790 there was a schism in the Jacobins. A hundred and fifty deputies, whose ostensible grievance was the admission of outsiders, took to meeting at the comte de Crillon's. The Jacobins came to terms with them, and got them back by reserving two sittings a week for deputies only, an arrangement which was still in force in June.³

But immediately after, a much more formidable rival arose. Mirabeau, with a few other deputies and some outside friends, had formed in November a short-lived society, called in

Body-guards who had gone to Paris. The *Journal*, in reporting the denunciation, suppressed their names, and remarked that if the Body-guards believed the calumnious reports that the King was in danger and the Assembly wishing to dethrone him, they had come to Paris from "a very praiseworthy feeling" and would soon find out their mistake. No. 14, p. 4.

¹ No. 38, p. 520, note.

² *Moniteur*, iii. 569 (la Rochefoucauld's letter). The "conferences" between Augustins and Jacobins, spoken of in the *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 8, p. 357, and by Duquesnoy, ii. 230, refer to this; they had nothing to do with the Jacobins. Barnave, *Œuvres*, ii. 37.

³ Barnave's letter, *Œuvres*, iv. 335-6, Lettre 416; Duquesnoy, ii. 468.

derision the "Comité des Trente"; and this society, revived and greatly enlarged under the auspices of Siéyes, Lafayette, Bailly, Mirabeau, Le Chapelier, la Rochefoucauld, Talleyrand, Thouret, Condorcet and others, became the "Société de 1789."¹

Its principles varied little from those of the Jacobins; its objects, political discussion and correspondence with affiliated societies, were the same, its spirit was very different. It was the club of moderation and comfort, which young men of fortune and family with liberal tendencies could join without compromising themselves too deeply in the eyes of the Court or Society. Rich bankers and financiers and well-known literary men frequented it. It occupied a fine suite of rooms in the Palais Royal, and inaugurated them in May with a costly banquet. At the end of June there were about three hundred members, and a good many deputies were supposed to belong, but, says Barnave, "to speak frankly, no one on the President's left dares to say that he has not yet joined the Jacobins' Society, and except forty or fifty men, no one likes to own that he has been to the 1789 Society." He says besides: "It is certain that the Society of 1789 contains many men of recognized ability and a great number of others whose probity is perfectly irreproachable. So much being granted, it is suspected of being guided by leaders who are themselves guided by views of personal fortune or ambition. It is believed that this Society has been formed to become the cradle and the support of the ministerial party in our Legislative Assemblies."²

This was the reverse of the Jacobin ideal, which according to Barnave was to be always out of office. He sketches it, and incidentally his own intended "career in the National Assemblies," in his letter to the Jacobins of Grenoble. When the Constitution has been made, he says, the ministry are sure to have a powerful party in future Assemblies, and if they succeed in obtaining a constant majority, the King's

¹ Barnave's letter, *Œuvres*, iv. 334, 336. On 28 March 1790 a paper was read to the new "Club de 1789"; *Chronique*, 6 April, p. 383.

² Barnave's letter (iv. 337, 339). He says that the annual subscription was 120 livres. That of the Jacobins was 24 livres and an entrance fee of 12 livres. Halem, pt. ii. 71; *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 54, p. 56.

suspensory veto will protect them, while there will be no means of keeping them in bounds. There must, therefore, be an Opposition which will make itself respected. "It will seem that the Legislature ought to be composed of a majority of men who, though always ready to adopt the useful and constitutional ideas presented to them, will always be on their guard against the snares which may be spread before them with the view of altering the Constitution insensibly.

" . . . I know that the administration of a great kingdom, that the action of the Government and the movement of the political machine require that men of talent and virtue should specially devote themselves, in various offices, to the direction of the executive power in the ministry ; but it is certain that enough men of this kind will always be found ; and it is no less necessary for the preservation of liberty that firm and capable men should devote themselves to a ceaseless watch on her behalf ; that without being the enemies of the executive power they should stand strict sentinels over it ; that in order to be perfectly sure of themselves they should even fortify themselves against every temptation by resolving never to wish for anything, never to accept anything. . . . Our Opposition must not be composed of men who want to overthrow the ministry in order that they may take its place," as they do in England, " but of men detached from all ambition, who wish the Constitution to remain intact, who will not oppose good measures, because they will have no interest in turning out those who govern, but who will be always ready to stop them at the first step which might begin an usurpation, or prepare the way for it.

" This, I think, is the kind of men which the Society of the Friends of the Constitution ought to endeavour to form, and it is not so simple as one might think, for in order to keep this character it is not enough to be honest and disinterested ; one must be able to resist all kinds of error and seduction, to despise the calumnies one hears about oneself and to distrust those which people try to insinuate about others ; to renounce the allurements of the most brilliant society in order to concentrate oneself among one's friends ; one must not be afraid of seeing oneself torn to pieces by a swarm of libellous

pamphlets, nor even of seeing the satisfaction one might receive from the affection of the people tarnished by the constant accusation of one's enemies, that one bribes them and incites them to riot."¹

Thus in Barnave's eyes "1789" was of "an absolutely different nature" from the Jacobins, and "without pronouncing on the degree of respect due to it, the object of its association, the spirit which must inspire it" were not the same as theirs.² But a mere conflict of ideals would not by itself have caused that rivalry between the two clubs, that split in the popular party of which Barnave thought so seriously that, though he minimized it to the Jacobins of Grenoble, he wrote to a friend: "These divisions being deadly for the Commonwealth, we have always tried to conceal them."³ It was the quarrel between Lafayette and the "Jacobin leaders," a quarrel which became a feud, which emphasized and embittered the division.

Lafayette had grounds of complaint to begin with. In the first days of his power he had been cut to the heart by the coldness and suspicions of Duport and Alexandre Lameth, and his intimate letters show that when, in September, he wrote of them as "factious" and spoke of breaking off relations, he was goaded by wounded affection. The 5th of October united them once more, but though he could not become indifferent to Duport he never cared for Lameth again. In his *Mémoires* he gives three chief reasons for the split, which he dates from the 5th of October: (i) That Duport and his friends disapproved of Lafayette's driving away the duc d'Orléans. (ii) That while Lafayette wished to finish the Revolution, they wished "to prolong disorder." (iii) That while all were agreed that a change of ministry was imperative, they did not care if Necker went with the rest, and Lafayette was determined to keep him.⁴

¹ *Lettre* 413-14.

² Letter, *Œuvres*, iv. 339.

³ *A. N. W.* 13. 219. Undated draft; continuation of *W.* 13. 218, dated, Paris, 13 June 1790.

⁴ Letters to Latour-Maubourg of 26 Aug. and 10 Sept. 1789 (the date from internal evidence); Mortimer-Ternaux, i. 427, 432; Lafayette, ii. 369-71.

The conflict of ideals is represented by (ii) ;¹ as to (iii), Lafayette's partisanship of Necker was warmer in recollection than it had been at the time ;² and (i) is an invention which looks unpleasantly like an attempt to connect the Jacobin leaders with d'Orléans.

First, there are no signs of a breach in October ; the triumvirate supported Lafayette after October 6th, and as late as Feb. 22nd, 1790, we find Duport praising him in the Assembly for quelling riots by his presence and the force of his virtues. Lafayette himself writes of the quarrel at the end of March as if it were something new.³ Secondly, there seems to be nothing to show that Duport and the Lameths disapproved of d'Orléans's expulsion, and Barnave certainly did not. To one correspondent he calmly mentions the different opinions

¹ Duport, when advocating his legal reforms, explained his position in words worth quoting. " I know what is always being said : ' You are changing all our institutions and our customs ; do you think you can do it without danger ? And why not content ourselves with reforming [existing institutions] and allow our successors to come, by degrees, to the point at which you place us all of a sudden ? ' I know all the force of this argument, and above all I know the feeling which almost always prompts it." His answer is that " Nations have only one moment in which they can regain their freedom," and it soon passes away ; that " one must not trust to time and to the progress of enlightenment to make great and useful ameliorations in Society. From the fear of losing what one has, inseparable from every revolution, the reasons against changing one's state are always very strong and they fight for the established order ; and then good citizenship is said to consist in not changing ' the Constitution of our fathers.' Worthy men rally round it." And he instances the England of his day, afraid of reforms which are obviously necessary. " These great and salutary innovations in human institutions are reserved for moments of crisis, when every one, compelled to take his part in keeping society together, feels the principles of morality re-awakening in his soul ; when we are led back to primitive notions of justice and reason, because routine and custom, those usual motives of our actions, fail us." The legislator must " seize these occasions, which only occur after the lapse of centuries, to regenerate men, and to pour their souls, so to speak, into new moulds, which will make them better, juster, moresociable." Duport, *Principes et Plan*, 104-6.

² See Lamarck (Mirabeau-Lamarck Correspondence), i. 402, 413.

³ *Journal de Paris*, 23 Feb. 1790, p. 215, and Le Hodey, viii. 462 ; Lafayette writes (ii. 458) : " I have for my Easter fortnight an Orleanist president [Menou], the quarrel with the Duport party," &c.

held about the reasons why the Duke had gone ; to another, on Oct. 19th, 1789, he says that it is not a time for Dauphiné to call the Estates together, &c., when Paris has been "justified by all the provinces ; when the King is in Paris, surrounded by respect and affection ; when the departure of the duc d'Orléans takes even a pretext away from the people who were wishing to excite fears." ¹

There is probably a good deal of truth in the reason which Théodore Lameth gives for the split ; namely, that Lafayette, who was no orator, did not like finding himself eclipsed in the Jacobins and began to look upon their leaders as his rivals.² Lafayette himself says in his *Mémoires*, that the Lameths organized the Jacobin Club with the "object of lessening his [Lafayette's] influence with the National Guards and the municipalities of France, and of opposing a denunciatory and disorganizing society to every civil and military body whose business it was to keep order." He says also that the Lameths had at their command an association called "the Sabbat," in which 110 men were employed to stir up the National Guards and Sections of Paris to denunciation and riot.³ Lafayette ought to be an authority here, but as there seems to be no other record of an association which would have attracted much attention, we must add this statement to the many reckless assertions which his *Mémoires* contain. In the absence of proof the character of the Lameths will refute it.

When in 1797 Lafayette, quite unprovoked, revived the old quarrel in a manner which can only be called odious, and dated it from October 1789, an allusion to the Orléans affair,

¹ A. N. W. 12. 5. Undated draft ; W. 13. 238, draft, Paris, 19 Oct. 1789.

² T. Lameth, *Mémoires*, 113-14.

³ Lafayette, ii. 371 and iv. 16, 173. It is possible that an explanation may be found in the *Révolutions de Paris*, iv. 685 : in June 1790 the Districts of Paris were annoyed with the National Guard, and several of them resolved to appoint a Watch Committee, "to follow the doings of the Staff." There are so many statements that Alexandre Lameth employed agents in Paris that there may be some truth in them ; perhaps the agents kept him posted up in the opinion of the day ; a man named Gilles, afterwards employed by the ministers, was said to be at the head of them. Whatever the truth, there is nothing to connect Barnave with any agents.

Alexandre replied that October 1789 had nothing to do with the question, and that Lafayette had made the breach in order to please the Court. In his History he puts Lafayette's political aberrations down to the influence of some great ladies who, with the best intentions, inspired him with some of their own fears of popular excesses, and separated him from his old friends. Lafayette's printed correspondence shows him engaged in political philandering with unnamed ladies, to one of whom he even finds time to write on the crowded night of Oct. 5th, and so far confirms Lameth.¹

Barnave only came into the quarrel because of his close connexion with his friends, and had he been a little older would probably have had the wisdom to prevent it. Generosity makes him reticent in the "Introduction," where he only says: "the respect which I owe to the misfortunes of certain persons imposes silence on me regarding these cabals which were the principal cause of the division of the Left, and through that of nearly all the misfortunes which have accompanied the Revolution."² Neither he nor his friends ever distrusted Lafayette fundamentally where the State was concerned, but it appears from his papers that at one time he thought the General had stooped very low in the pursuit of popularity, that he believed him a partner in Mirabeau's intrigues for the downfall of the Jacobin leaders, and responsible in part for the libels connecting them with d'Orléans which were appearing in the Press. He wrote in private: "M. de Mi. has never given up the absolute veto, M. de L. F. has never given up the American idea of two chambers and the choice of the judges by the king; others have their opinions too, and all are led by deep hatred for men whose character and incorruptibility have been the object of their base intrigues these six months—for men who, above all, do them the wrong of knowing how profoundly vile they are. Their system is to maintain that these men wanted to found a republic, and to recall every one to what they call 'the only principles of free monarchies.'"³

¹ T. Lameth, *Mémoires*, 131-42; A. Lameth, ii. 10; Lafayette, ii. 411.

² *Introduction*, 118.

³ A. N. W. 13. 219. Draft letter, undated; continuation of W. 13. 218, dated Paris, 13 June, 1790.

In public he was very careful what he said, and to the Jacobins of Grenoble, who had evidently asked him what he thought of Lafayette, he answers : " You will not require me to give you my opinion of individuals. As to those with whom I am intimately connected, it is sufficiently shown by my attachment to them, and there are men among those with whom I have not always been in agreement of whom it would be very favourable, in consideration of their sincerity. But it depends on a multitude of little things which one does not repeat, and one ought not to produce one's conclusions when one desires to keep one's proofs, or indications of proofs, to oneself. Besides, this kind of judgement is not necessary to the public." ¹

Personally he seems to have disliked Lafayette heartily, and he wrote an unflattering " portrait " of the General, unnamed, but easily identifiable. Lafayette's one passion is celebrity and he has no other. " His eyes, his countenance, the sound of his voice, the always uncertain expression of his features " show weakness ; so does " a kind of timidity " which " excludes frankness and energy." Yet he has " a face and manners which it is easy to think romantic." " As he is never moved by what goes on round him and not given to taking energetic action on his own initiative, it is easy for him to remain the same whatever happens ; he succeeds by calmness, consecutiveness and uniformity ; he is not easily troubled by storms, but he is never equal to great occasions ; he is capable of resisting defeat, he is incapable of profiting by a lucky moment or a great victory. . . . It is needless to say that he has little wit and no genius, that after he has conceived projects which are vast because he is hungry for glory, but which are never either new or profound, he lowers himself to all sorts of petty means to carry them out ; so that if few men make fewer of those big mistakes which affect the public and their own fame, few men are better fitted to make all who see him at close quarters despise what History calls heroes." ²

The fact is, that Lafayette offended Barnave and his friends deeply, by sinning against that cardinal dogma of the Revolution which laid down that the work is everything and the

¹ Letter, *Œuvres*, iv. 340.

² *A. N. W.* 12. 33.

man who effects it of no importance except as an instrument. "Confidence blindly attached to the man himself is unworthy of a free people, and can only be excused by very long and constant trials," wrote Barnave,¹ and this confidence was just what Lafayette, who believed himself the guide and guardian of the Revolution, claimed as his due. His character is a mass of contradictions. He stands as a sort of incarnation of chivalry and loyalty, and rightly so; yet he was often far from generous, and his idea of the reason why the Jacobins were founded sufficiently indicates his limitations. His vanity was sublime, and it would be hard to parallel the testimonial he gave himself when, answering an attack in the Assembly, he said that he spoke "with the confidence of a man who has never had to blush for a single action or a single feeling."² There is naïve simplicity in this, and in the way he played to the gallery as he pranced about Paris on his white horse and harangued the idolizing crowd; yet he was not simple, and he thought himself deep.

As Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard of Paris, responsible for the order of the city and the King's safety, he wielded a power which might have made him dangerous, and Mirabeau's taunt that he was "Mayor of the Palace" had some truth in it, while Mirabeau's nickname of "Cromwell-Grandison" is the most enlightening comment ever made on him.³ It is easy to understand how sorely he tried contemporaries who were not among his admirers. He was the antithesis of the early Jacobin ideal.

In consequence the Jacobins devoted much time and thought to him. There were two attempts at a reconciliation in 1790: one in August, when Thouret was the mediator, the other at the end of September, when Lafayette made approaches through Danton. For three consecutive evenings there were conferences at his house between him and the plenipotentiaries of the Jacobins: Duport, Lameth, Barnave, Danton and Durand. According to Danton, Lafayette expressed a wish

¹ Letter, *Œuvres*, iv. 340.

² 12 May 1790, *Moniteur*, iv. 351.

³ Almost equally good is Mirabeau's untranslatable "il a sauté pour mieux reculer."

to introduce a second chamber when the Constitution was nearing completion ; according to Lafayette, Lameth expressed a fear that this would be attempted and Lafayette disclaimed any idea of bringing up the question.¹ Danton is more likely to be correct. The conferences seem to have ended in increased distrust on either side, and the Jacobins manifested theirs openly in November.

The Assembly was intending to organize a new Body-guard for the King. The Gardes françaises, who had been incorporated in the various battalions of the Parisian National Guard, as "the Centre" of each, the only paid troops among volunteers, felt that they had a right to form part of the King's Military Household, feared that they would be left out, and were preparing to demonstrate. In order to keep them quiet, Lafayette induced the King to write him a letter containing an assurance that he meant to employ them, and communicated the good news to the "Centre" of one battalion, who hastened to pass it on to their comrades. As the matter rested, not with the King and Lafayette, but with the Assembly, Lafayette's action was unconstitutional, and the commander of a battalion, Gerdret, who happened to be a Jacobin, denounced it to the Society (Nov. 7th). Jealousy for the authority of the Assembly, fears that the King would gain command of an independent force, and anger with Lafayette who seemed to be scheming it, spread alarm not only among the Jacobins but beyond their borders, and a certain amount of ferment was occasioned.² On this, the superior officers of one division of the National Guards printed a circular letter to their brother commanders, proposing to ostracize the meddlesome Gerdret, as a tribute to Lafayette. Gerdret read the circular to the Jacobins, and the Jacobins, with Barnave at their head, were so indignant at this interference with the freedom of public criticism, that a resolution, proposed and

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 43, p. 177, no. 45, p. 269 ; Danton on 20 June 1791, in *Journal des Débats des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 13. Lafayette, letters to Bouillé of 10 Aug. and 3 Oct. 1790 (iii. 135-6, 147). Lafayette's general account (iv. 16) written 1797-1800 cannot be reconciled with other accounts.

² Halem, pt. ii. 206 ; Gorsas, xviii. 130-2 ; *Chronique*, 9 Nov., p. 1249.

drawn up by Barnave, was printed and sent to the affiliated Societies. It condemned "a kind of oppression which, by intimidating the courage of good citizens, tends to free public men from the useful supervision with which they ought always to be surrounded," expressed esteem for Gerdret, and expelled all members who should take part in punishing him for his communications to the Club. Twelve hundred members asked to be allowed to sign it.¹

The Gerdret incident seems something of a storm in a teacup, but Barnave was only carrying out his ideal of the Jacobins as sentinels of the Constitution in a rather crude way. He was keenly alive to the possibility that the National Guards might lose their character of citizens, and become a danger to the community by forming a great political organization or a great body with a military spirit. The Gerdret incident showed that there was a tendency to such a development, and Lafayette appeared to be encouraging it in more ways than one. Some of the National Guards who had come to Paris for the Federation in July remained there instead of going home and started a club, called by others "Club des Fédérés," but calling itself "Société des Gardes Nationaux de France" and claiming to represent the National Guards of the kingdom. Lafayette allowed the Fédérés to send two members daily to be on guard at the Tuileries, and supported their request when they asked leave to send two more to the Assembly. Alexandre Lameth, who was then President, refused it as unconstitutional,² and the Fédérés appealed to the Jacobins for countenance.

In the debate on this application Barnave explained the principles underlying the institution of National Guards,³ and it was he who drew up the Jacobins' answer: "The Friends of the Constitution do not think that the National Guards

¹ 15 Nov., Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 377-8; *Révolutions de Paris*, vi. 289-91; *Orateur du Peuple*, iii. 263-4.

² *Orateur du Peuple*, iii. 392; *Grand Combat des Démagogues avec la vérité*, pp. 13-14. For the Club des Fédérés see *Orateur du Peuple*, iii. nos. 50 and 53; *Feuille du Jour*, 10 Dec. 1790, p. 75; *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 3, p. 141.

³ Debate of 1 Dec.; duc de Chartres in *Correspondance de L. P. J. d'Orléans*, ii. 121-2.

form in France a body separate from the body of the people; they believe that the right to defend the Constitution under the flag of the country belongs equally to all citizens, and that an institution which would reserve it for a particular class would set up the most unjust and most dangerous of privileges." They "recognize . . . no representation of the National Guards of France. Such a representation would be in their eyes that of the nation itself, and the nation has placed it in the National Assembly alone. Besides, it is not in a military character, and bearing arms, that citizens ought to meet and form associations for debating. Every one, as a citizen, has a right to express his opinions; every one, as a citizen, has the free use of his rights and of his political powers; but as a soldier, each can be nothing but the passive instrument of the law, with no will but that of the law, no guide but the voice of the magistrate who is its organ."¹

If Fréron's report that Barnave "denounced" Lafayette and demanded that he should be asked to explain his encouragement of the *Fédérés* Club be correct, this must have been the occasion.² But Barnave certainly allowed no personal feelings to influence him, and in a difficult letter which he wrote for the Club, not long after, a letter at which other members had first tried their hands, he repeated much what he had said to the Jacobins of Grenoble. It was an answer to the Jacobins of Marseilles, who had inquired what they ought to think of Lafayette, whose patriotism seemed to them hollow.

"Public functionaries are only accountable to the nation for their public actions. These actions are known to all citizens and every one can follow and judge them. From this point of view the Commander-in-Chief of the Parisian National Guard is under the eyes of all Frenchmen, and we could tell you nothing that you do not know as well as we. To wish to do more, and to examine the opinions or the private doings of a citizen who has ceased to attend our Society, would be to set up an inquisition which exceeds our powers and does not

¹ *Moniteur*, vi. 585-6; the letter is dated 3 Dec.; M. Aulard reprints it, *Jacobins*, i. 400.

² *Orateur du Peuple*, iii. 476. There are difficulties about the exact date.

befit our character. What we must represent to you, gentlemen, is that it little befits free men to attach so much importance to individuals, and to believe that the fate of the French nation can ever depend on their virtues or their opinions.”¹

Barnave and his friends believed, until bitter experience had taught them otherwise, that truth and reason have only to show themselves in a convincing manner in order to prevail, and M. Droz’s statement that Barnave meant the Jacobins to be a barrier against exaggeration is borne out by the maxim which he gave the Grenoble Society: “Liberty is won by enthusiasm, but on the other hand it is kept by resisting enthusiasm, and nowhere is it more necessary to imbue oneself with this truth than in France.”² We may therefore give credit to M. Droz’s report of what he once said in conversation to Le Chapelier, who was making the criticism that the Jacobins admitted members too easily and that there was a danger of the Club’s becoming as violent as the Assembly of the Cordeliers district. Barnave replied, that under a free Government there were certain to be violent and extravagant societies, but that these societies would not be dangerous in France, where they could not compete with the Jacobins. It was necessary, he said, to let in some violent men, to show that thought was free, but they would have no chance of rivalling the leaders, they would be swamped by the good sense and good faith of the bulk of the Club, and their speeches would do no harm. “And as the Club grows more enlightened,” he added, “our majority there will increase.”³ Hence came the leaders’ toleration of the unreasonable element in the Club.

It will be seen that the founders of the Jacobins had no idea what the Society would become, and fancied that it could be guided along safe ways.

“Once to have hoped is no matter for scorning,” and they can hardly be blamed for a blindness which they shared with Mirabeau, who left them for a time, but not because he feared their tendencies, and who returned to them in October.

¹ 17 Dec., *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 4, p. 157; the letter is dated 18 Dec. *Journal des Clubs*, no. 6, vol. i, quoted by M. Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 408. ² *Lettre* 413. ³ Droz, iii. 105.

CHAPTER XV

THE RIGHT OF MAKING WAR AND PEACE

BARNAVE had been prominent among the deputies who had taken from the Crown the prerogative of appointing the Judges; he was to be even more prominent in dealing the harder blow which fell in the same month of May.

In foreign affairs the Crown still reigned supreme, for the Assembly had not as yet been obliged to deal with them practically. Theoretically the doctrine which was to carry terror through the Courts of Europe, namely that every nation has a right to dispose of itself, had already been laid down, and Barnave had been one of its exponents. "The fate of this island" [Corsica], he had said, "depends neither on treaties, nor on the right of conquest, but solely on the wishes that its inhabitants have expressed;" and he had declared that the cession of Brittany to France, by Duchess Anne, "could only bind the Breton people in so far as the conditions were agreeable to them."¹

It followed logically from this doctrine that one nation must not conquer another. Further, if unjust wars were to be prevented, a nation must keep the right of declaring war in the hands of its representatives. The idea was in the air and we find the toast, "the right of Peace and War to the Nation," being drunk at a patriotic dinner on May 5th.² But the question was new and there had been no debate on it. A dispute between Great Britain and Spain, in which France was very nearly involved, brought it to the front.

Spain, the ally of France, claimed exclusive sovereignty over the western shores of North America, in virtue of a gift made by Pope Alexander VI in 1493. She could not enforce this claim, but a Spanish fleet had lately asserted it by visiting a

¹ 21 Jan. 1790, *Journal des Débats*, no. 152, sup., p. 2; 9 Jan. 1790, *Courrier de Provence*, no. 90, p. 19.

² *Moniteur*, iv. 291.

British trading settlement on the shores of Nootka Sound in Vancouver's Island and seizing two vessels which lay there, with their crews, and the Spanish Government demanded the punishment of the trespassers from Great Britain. The British Government refused to discuss the Spanish claims until satisfaction for the outrage had been given; Spain insisted on her rights, Great Britain retorted by claiming counter-rights, sent a plenipotentiary to Madrid to negotiate, and at the same time began to equip a fleet and to make every preparation for war.¹ France and Spain were linked together by the "Pacte de Famille," a treaty signed in 1761, the exact terms of which were not known to the public, though it was known to contain offensive and defensive clauses in virtue of which Spain had more than once come to the help of France in war. The French Government was therefore bound to support Spain, and orders were given to fit out fourteen ships of the line; but as there were no funds to pay for the equipment it became necessary to apply to the Assembly. The comte de Montmorin, a weak, well-meaning man, wholly devoted to the King but also, though fitfully, more than half in favour of the Revolution and anxious to keep on good terms with the Assembly, was Minister of Foreign Affairs. He wrote a letter to the President, explaining what had been done. The King, he said, was making every effort with the two Powers to avert war, but when England armed France must do so also. He referred in veiled terms to the "Pacte de Famille," and expressed his confidence that the patriotism of the Assembly would maintain the national honour and vote the requisite sums.²

When the letter was read, on May 14th, the Assembly realized in a flash that France, at this critical moment, half way through the Revolution, was in danger of being dragged into war over a dispute with which she had no concern. Many deputies sprang to their feet, crying for leave to speak. To the surprise of those who were not in the secret, the President, Thouret, answered that a list of speakers had already been made out. 'How was this possible?' asked Charles Lameth;

¹ J. Holland Rose, *William Pitt and National Revival*, 564 (London, 1911); *Moniteur*, iv. 362-3. The French papers were well informed.

² *Journal des Débats*, no. 277, p. 8. The *Moniteur* shortens the letter.

'how could members put their names down before they knew what they were to speak on?' A secretary explained that twenty members had put their names down to speak on a ministerial letter.¹ The truth was that the ministers, who wanted to secure popular supporters, had divulged the letter to their friends in the Assembly the evening before. So much indignation was shown by the rest of the Assembly that the list was discarded and the debate adjourned.

Barnave had gone up to the bureau after the letter was read, and he naturally spoke of his surprise and anger at the stratagem of the list to Noailles, a leading Jacobin, who was standing by. But Noailles's name was on the list,² and he chose to consider that his honour was impugned; angry words passed, and Noailles challenged Barnave. They fought the same evening in the Bois de Boulogne, with pistols. "The duel could only have put the Jacobins into mourning whatever had been the issue," says Camille Desmoulins; "happily the two champions were more polite to each other on the field than they had been in the Senate." Barnave, as the offended party, fired first; he was no shot, and missed. Noailles had already repented; he asked Barnave if he were satisfied. "No," was the answer, "you have stood my fire, I must stand yours." Noailles fired into the air, the seconds declared themselves satisfied, and the two opponents embraced. It was a foolish quarrel, but Barnave was in no way the aggressor, and when one reads how the aristocrats said that the pistols were only charged with powder, and offered a reward to any one who would find the balls, one can understand that it would have been difficult to refuse to fight.³

On the morrow when the Assembly discussed Montmorin's letter, Alexandre Lameth was the first to take the bull by the horns. Orders to fit out the ships had been given, he said, so that France would be prepared in any event, and he proposed

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 367.

² It was reported that Dupont, Le Chapelier, Biron, and Lafayette were also on it. Lamarck, ii. 16.

³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 27, pp. 636-7. The duel from *Gazette universelle*, 16 May, p. 670. *Révolutions de Paris*, v. 221; Bailli de Virieu, *Correspondance*, 193.

to debate then and there on the constitutional question : ' to whom ought the nation to delegate the right of making war and peace ? ' Dupont de Nemours was for putting off the debate for three weeks : " In three weeks' time," answered Barnave, " we may be at war. We must make up our minds now ; if we are silent we abandon our rights to untrustworthy ministers." Broglie, Robespierre, Reubell, Menou, and d'Aiguillon added their arguments. Mirabeau tried for an adjournment, but abandoned it when he saw how eager the Assembly was to tackle the great question. He did, however, carry a motion to express approval both of the ordering of armaments and of the negotiations into which the King had entered, and Barnave was defeated on an amendment not to extend the approval to the negotiations till the constitutional question had been decided. It must not be supposed that Barnave was hostile to the Spanish alliance ; he had already touched on its advantages in his report on the Colonies, but he put the interests of the nation in the matter of war and peace first.

To Robespierre belongs the honour of suggesting one of the chief features of the debate. ' How would it be,' he asked, ' if you were to make it clear to other countries that " the French nation, content with being free, wishes never to engage in another war " ? ' The duc de Lévis took up the idea and proposed a declaration to the effect that France would never attack the rights of another nation and would henceforth only fight in defence of her own.¹

On Sunday the 16th began that famous week-long debate which is perhaps the most interesting in the whole history of the Assembly, for the orators on both sides were at their best, and though arguments were often repeated there was so much variety in the speakers' point of view that each contributed something to the discussion. Nearly all started from a high level ; peace, they were agreed, is the greatest of blessings, aggressive war always wrong. ' Why not draw a distinction between *defensive* and *offensive*, and give the King the right of declaring defensive war, while making the consent of the Assembly necessary for offensive war ? ' asked Malouet and

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 371-5. Barnave, Rapport du 8 mars 1790, p. 10 and 11, *Procès-verbal*, vol. 14.

some others. The orators of the Left pointed out that it is so difficult to draw the line between defensive and offensive wars that ministers would be able to represent any given war as defensive ; and they would be certain to do so, because kings and ministers are for ever hurrying nations into disastrous wars for petty ends. 'Free nations and republics have made as many unjust wars as kings,' replied the orators of the Right, 'and no state is so easily corruptible as a republic.' They dwelt also upon the fact that the two things most necessary to ensure success, both in war and negotiations, are promptitude and secrecy in operation, both of which would be unattainable if an Assembly discussed such matters. The Left answered, that promptitude in action would be amply secured by giving the King the power of making preparations, and the direction of the forces ; as for secrecy, the less secrecy there is in politics the better. "A generous people has no need of a tortuous and embroiled policy," said d'Aiguillon. "Mystery is only necessary where injustice is intended," said Pétion.¹ The Right made much use of the argument that there could be no danger in leaving the prerogative to the King, because the Assembly could always stop a war by refusing subsidies ; added to which, the fear of ministerial responsibility would keep ministers in check. The Left, who had studied History and the nature of man to more purpose, answered, that once war has begun, it is almost impossible to stop it, and that in the excitement of a war ministerial responsibility can easily be evaded. One weighty argument used against the royal prerogative was, that "the powers must not be confounded," and it may be noticed that the high constitutional debates of the Constituent Assembly sometimes smacked of the phraseology as well as of the subtleties of the Athanasian Creed.

Maury quoted ancient authorities to show that the kings of France had always had the right of making war ; Fréteau brought out better authorities to show that he was mistaken. Robespierre called the King the "commis" and delegate of the nation, an expression which he had to retract ; but other references to Louis XVI were respectful and affectionate, and when Chabroud said that the King's name would always be

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 384, 390.

received in the Assembly with acclamation, the Left and the galleries thundered applause.¹ Charles Lameth made a great popular hit in a spirited but rambling speech: 'The enemies of the Revolution, powerful as they are, will never succeed,' he said; "if they have gold, we have steel," and the galleries clapped in transport.² He also provided the Right with an effective diversion, by saying that even so good a monarch as Henri IV was just about to set Europe in a blaze for the sake of the *princesse de Condé*, when he died. Loud was the outcry and bitter were the taunts at this "insult" to the memory of the great King.

Cazalès's eloquent speech, Jingo in sentiment, was not worthy of himself or of the occasion. He defended offensive wars; he tried to stir up jealousy of England. "As for me," he cried, 'I declare . . . that the blood of a single one of my fellow citizens is dearer to me than that of all the nations of the world.' To the eternal honour of the Assembly, which had grasped the great principle that true love of one's own country can never mean injustice to other nations, these words were received with a general murmur, and Cazalès felt obliged to excuse his own warmth and exaggeration. Nor did he make more impression when he dwelt on the weakness of France, now "the least redoubtable kingdom of Europe," unable to stand without allies.³

By the time that Mirabeau's turn came, on Thursday, thirty-two orators had spoken, and still the Assembly was eager to listen, and all Paris, understanding how much was at stake, waited for the decision with breathless interest.

Two types of decree had been proposed; one gave the right of making war or peace and of contracting alliances to the King, with or without restrictions. The other gave the right of decision to the National Assembly, while the King, as executive power, was to have the initiative, was to dispose of the forces, to make such military preparations as he thought necessary, and to negotiate peace and alliances, which were to be ratified by the Assembly. Of this type were the bills of Pétion and Menou⁴ who, like several others, included in their proposals a manifesto against conquests.

¹ *Moniteur*, 397, 405.

³ *Ibid.*, 421-2.

² *Ibid.*, 387.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 391, 411.

On Wednesday, it was known that Mirabeau was going to propose a decree unfavourable to the Assembly. Alexandre Lameth taxed him with it, when he sat himself down on the bench just above him for a talk, and Mirabeau suggested that they should come to an understanding. They joined each other, as if by chance, in the garden of the Feuillants; Mirabeau produced his bill and Lameth said it was ambiguous. But it was undesirable to be seen having a long talk with Mirabeau, and Lameth invited him to come in the evening to meet Duport and Barnave at Laborde's house in the rue d'Artois, which was close to Mirabeau's own dwelling. Mirabeau accepted, he came to Laborde's at eleven, and a conference on the general situation took place. When the question of the day was reached, the three friends did everything they could to win Mirabeau over. They appealed to his ambition, by representing that he would be working against himself if he, whose power over future Assemblies must always be so great, were to deprive the Assembly of its rights. They appealed to his vanity by offering to leave the glory of the day to him and to confine themselves to supporting him, if he would adopt their proposals. They told him that they were certain of a majority without him, how much more then with him. Mirabeau was shaken; he seemed to agree with them in principle, but he objected that they would never get a majority, and he told them that they had no idea what efforts had been made to secure one; he even hinted that their lives would not be safe if they succeeded—a warning of which they made light. He said that he would send them his decision by letter, and Lameth received a note from him the next morning, saying that they were mistaken as to how votes would go; that for himself he should follow a *via media*, but that he would never forget their chivalry.¹

"I am not entirely my own master; I am pledged," he said, according to Lameth, and in truth he was just entering into that agreement with the Court by which he undertook to give advice in return for payment and to support the royal cause when it did not clash with what he considered the true interests

¹ A. Lameth, ii. 280-2 note. The account has not the authority of a contemporary record, but there seems no reason to doubt its substantial correctness.

of the Revolution. The Court set great store by the prerogative of making war and peace, and Mirabeau was bent on preserving as much of this prerogative as circumstances would allow; but he was even more bent on increasing his prestige by a victory. His written speech, able and insidious, was said by his admirers, who did not approve of it, to be chiefly the work of his secretary, Pellenc;¹ if so, he must have retouched it carefully.

He began by saying, as if it were a new discovery, that it would be equally dangerous to give the contested right exclusively to the King or to the Assembly; that they must exercise it concurrently. Then, while pretending to define the share of the Assembly, he proceeded to deprive it practically of any share at all. His argument was this: It is absolutely necessary for the safety of the State that the executive power should control and direct the national forces, make necessary preparations for war, and be ready to resist aggression. But this power, which must be vested in the Crown, gives the Crown *de facto* the right of making war. Offensive wars, we must remember, are out of the question; we are only dealing with defensive wars. We have so much territory, so many interests to protect, that we cannot restrict our preparations. At any moment hostilities may break out, almost by chance—for instance by a quarrel between two vessels; therefore we must always be prepared for war. But if hostilities do break out, the King must repel the foreigner at once, he cannot wait for the permission of the Legislature; “war has therefore begun.” Again; if neighbouring nations make hostile preparations, he must at once make counter-preparations, and here too “war has begun.” The Assembly cannot, therefore, have any voice in making war. But, as soon as war has broken out, the Assembly has the power of expressing disapproval, of requiring the King to negotiate peace, of refusing subsidies, of prosecuting ministers.²

Mirabeau took great pains to make his unpalatable doctrine go down. He repeated arguments already used, intercalated skilful passages of patriotic and revolutionary rhetoric, and

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 28, p. 185; Montlosier, 134.

² See Mirabeau's *résumé* of his argument, *Moniteur*, iv. 420.

ended with a fine, and politic, appeal to Siéyes, "the great thinker," to break that "silence and inaction" which was in the speaker's eyes "a public calamity," and to fill up this gap in the Constitution.¹

Mirabeau had expounded his system clearly, but his bill was ambiguous and capable of a different interpretation. The important articles can be summed up thus :

1. "The right of making war and peace belongs to the nation ; the exercise of this right is delegated concurrently to the executive and legislative powers in the following manner :"
 2. The task of providing for the safety of the kingdom and of maintaining its rights belongs to the King, who controls the national forces, negotiates, &c. 3. When hostilities are imminent, or have begun, the King must notify the legislature without delay and ask for funds. 4 and 5. Thereupon, if the legislature judges that "the hostilities which have begun" are an aggression on the part of ministers or other agents of the Crown, it prosecutes such agents, "the National Assembly declaring, to that end, that the French nation renounces every kind of conquest, and that it will never employ its arms against the liberty of any people." If the legislature refuses supplies and expresses disapproval, the executive power must stop hostilities at once. 7. At any time during the war the legislature can require the King to negotiate peace. 9. Treaties of peace, alliance, and commerce must be ratified by the Assembly.²

Barnave, as was his usual custom, had reserved his speech for the end of the debate, and it fell to him to answer Mirabeau.

He exposed the weak points in Mirabeau's arguments on Thursday evening at the Jacobins. Mirabeau, who was present, "acknowledged that M. Barnave had hit upon the real point of the difficulty," but persisted in his opinions, and ended by saying, "we shall fight upon this ground to-morrow."³

On Friday, May 21st, after Cazalès and three others had

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 413-20.

² See *Moniteur*, iv. 416 ; where the articles are rather differently numbered.

³ *Examen d'un écrit intitulé : Discours et réplique du comte de Mirabeau, par M. Alexandre Lameth* (Paris, Imp. Nat., 1790, 85 pp.), p. 7. Barnave, in several letters, vouches for the correctness of this tract.

spoken, it came to the turn of Barnave, who repeated to some extent the arguments he had used in the Jacobins.

The principle of the division of powers, he said, has been almost universally acknowledged. The nation has delegated its sovereign power to the National Assembly and to the King.¹ The national will is expressed by Assemblies elected by the people, and only such assemblies can express it ; it is carried out by the King, who not only directs the operations of war, but represents the French nation before other nations ; "all that bears a character of majesty we have placed on the head of the King."² Now the making of war, an act which entails vast consequences for the nation, is pre-eminently a case for the declaration of the national will ; it must therefore be confided to those whose function it is to express that will. But M. de Mirabeau has deprived the Assembly of all participation in this act, for when once war has been declared, when once foreign powers are in arms against us, it will be impossible for the Assembly to decree that the war must stop. He has therefore, in effect, given the right unreservedly to the King, and he has done so by eluding the question, by deliberately confusing an outbreak of hostilities with a declaration of war. If his contentions were true, "it would be neither the legislative power nor the executive power which would declare it ; it would be the first captain of a vessel, the first merchant, the first officer, who would seize on the right of declaring war by attacking an individual or by resisting his attack."

In this manner he repudiated Mirabeau's sophisms, one after the other, clearing up what Mirabeau had left obscure, and putting the old arguments in favour of the Assembly in a way that gave them freshness and new force. When was secrecy necessary ? he asked. In provisional measures and negotiations. But all these would be left to the executive power and would still be secret. When it comes to an actual decision as to whether there shall be war or peace—and this was all that the Assembly would reserve to itself—dissimulation is impossible ;

¹ He was here speaking of the ordinary Legislative Assembly, not of the Constituent Assembly.

² He writes (*Introduction*, 121), that he had developed the doctrine of the King as representative more fully than the *Moniteur* reported.

then things "must be done and ought to be done in the light of day."

As for ministerial responsibility: "Pericles engaged in the Peloponnesian War when he saw that he could not give in his accounts. So much for responsibility!" When the war is over you can indeed punish, but "when your fellow-citizens, your brothers have perished, of what use will the death of a minister be?" As for refusing subsidies, that "would not be stopping the war, it would be ceasing to defend ourselves, it would be putting our frontiers at the enemy's mercy."

He drew a telling contrast between wars made by ministers and wars made by the legislature; rare, because each member of an Assembly was bound by many ties to the people on whom the burden would fall; glorious, because when such wars are made, the heart of the nation will be in them. "True lovers of liberty," he concluded, will ask us not to grieve the King's heart by the gift of this terrible power, not to confer on the Government "this right, baneful not only to the French but also to other nations who, sooner or later, must follow our example." He then read his bill; no better, he said, perhaps worse, than those of MM. Pétion, Saint-Fargeau, and Menou. It was short and simple.¹

"To the King, supreme depositary of the executive power, belongs the right of ensuring the defence of the frontiers and the preservation of all national possessions; of making, to this end, the necessary preparations when the proceedings or the hostilities of other nations shall menace the safety of the State; of directing the land and sea forces; of conducting negotiations; of appointing ambassadors; of preparing and signing treaties of peace, alliance, and commerce; of proposing to the legislative body all that shall seem to him conducive to the interests of the empire with regard to war, peace, and treaties;

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 422-4, 428-30. The bill from the *Journal des Débats*, no. 284, pp. 13-14. This version agrees with that of the *Point du Jour* and also with a draft in pencil among Barnave's papers (*A. N. W.* 13. 250). The draft has "is entrusted" instead of "belongs," "should menace" instead of "shall menace;" and a few words after "shall seem to him" are illegible. I have adopted the reading of "concluding peace," that of the MS., and the *Point du Jour*, rather than "preserving peace" of the *Débats*.

but the legislative body shall exercise the right of deciding upon war, of concluding peace, and of resolving definitely upon the conditions of all treaties.

‘In case the political situation of foreign nations shall oblige the King to make extraordinary preparations, he shall notify them to the legislative body if it be sitting, and shall summon it without delay if it be not.’

Barnave surpassed himself that day, he spoke with a force and an eloquence which went home to all hearts ; the galleries applauded—“ they love to see young Dares throw old Entelles and roll him in the dust,” wrote Desmoulins ; the Assembly shared their enthusiasm. When he finished, a little before four o’clock, after speaking for an hour and a half,¹ there were shouts of *aux voix!* the equivalent of “ divide,” and the day seemed won. But already Cazalès was on his feet ; ‘ M. Barnave’s arguments are ‘ infinitely specious ’ and call for discussion. It is too late to-day, why not adjourn till to-morrow and decide the whole question then ? ’ Mirabeau, too, insisted on his right to reply : ‘ M. Barnave’s speech is very able, but all his arguments can be refuted. If those whom they have carried away think them unanswerable, it will be only generous in them to hear what I have to say ; if they do not it is their duty to listen.’ Mirabeau was not well received, but his demand was granted, and the Assembly resolved to decide the question the next day.²

The crowd gave the popular leaders an ovation and followed Barnave a long way, cheering and shouting.³ At the doors of the Manège Le Chapelier proposed to Alexandre Lameth that they should agree together upon the exact wording of a bill, Mirabeau’s being inadmissible, and a meeting was arranged, also at Laborde’s. The three friends repeated to Le Chapelier

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 27, p. 655 ; *Courrier français*, 22 May, 175.

² *Moniteur*, iv. 430, &c. Montigny (vii. 263, note) repeats a story on the authority, so he says, of Mirabeau’s friend Frochot, that Mirabeau, after listening to Barnave for a time and taking notes, exclaimed “ I have him ! ” and went out to walk in the gardens. It is hardly likely.

³ *Assemblée Nationale et Commune de Paris, par suite du journal intitulé “Versailles et Paris”*, no. 290, p. 1, note.

what they had already said to Mirabeau ; namely that two questions were at stake ; the constitutional principle, and the war to which the circumstances of the moment might lead, and that they were determined to safeguard the public interest on both points. Le Chapelier, who was no longer quite the sturdy, downright Breton he had been at Versailles, agreed with them, but seemed embarrassed. He told them that he would propose something which he hoped would satisfy them ; ¹ and as soon as he had left them came to an understanding with Mirabeau and Lafayette.

Mirabeau was now in a perilous situation. His defeat in the Assembly seemed certain and he had incurred the wrath of the people ; a wrath embittered by wounded affection. They had hooted him on Thursday ; ² on Friday a violent pamphlet called " Great treachery of the comte de Mirabeau " was cried in the streets. He extricated himself by the force of his genius and by an audacious misrepresentation.

When the debate began on the 22nd, Le Chapelier gave him an opening. The King's right to some kind of participation in the act of declaring war had not been disputed, but the bills of Barnave, Pétion and the rest, while giving him the initiative with the legislature, had not made it clear whether that initiative belonged *exclusively* to him. Le Chapelier, assuming that they meant the Assembly to have the right of declaring war *without* the King's concurrence, as well as on his initiative, protested that here was an extra chance of entering into hostilities, and that the danger had been avoided by Mirabeau's bill alone. He proposed one or two amendments to this bill. One, which replaced the words " if the legislative body approves of the war " by the more definite " if the legislative body decides that war shall be made," appeared to give the right to the Assembly while really leaving the bill as ambiguous as ever, since the right of beginning a war before appealing to the Assembly remained with the King. It was, in fact, a mere verbal alteration. But the Assembly swallowed the bait and a short silence of doubt was succeeded by almost universal applause.³

¹ A. Lameth, ii. 314, note.

² *Assemblée Nationale*, &c., loc. cit.

³ *Moniteur*, iv. 438.

Duport insisted that the bill was still ambiguous, but Mirabeau's way was now clear. As he was mounting the tribune steps, Volney said to him, "Well, Mirabeau; yesterday the Capitol, to-day the Tarpeian Rock!"¹ and with ready wit the great orator made this the text of a magnificent exordium. He alluded to his past services: "And I too, a few days ago the people would have carried me in triumph, and now they are crying in the streets, 'Great treachery of the comte de Mirabeau.'—I did not need this lesson to know how short is the distance from the Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock; but the man who fights for reason and his country does not hold himself vanquished so easily." Then he turned to the question: "M. Barnave has done me the honour of answering me alone; I will show the same deference for his talents which he more justly merits, and in my turn I will try to refute him."

Mirabeau's refutation, spoken not written, is amazingly clever. What Barnave had said was irrefutable, but Mirabeau assumed that he himself had all along given the right of decision to the Assembly, and answered Barnave as if Barnave, knowing this, had been arguing *for* the exclusion of the King from any participation in the act of making war, whereas he had in reality been arguing *against* the exclusion of the Assembly. 'There are two powers,' said Barnave, 'the legislative, whose function it is to express the will of the nation, the executive, whose function it is to carry out that will: in the act of making war the will of the nation is involved and the representatives of the people must express it.' 'You are wrong in dividing the two powers thus,' said Mirabeau; 'the will of the nation is expressed, not by the legislative body alone, but by the King in concert with it, for the right of suspensory veto given him by the Constitution gives him a share in expressing that will.' Now Barnave's own doctrine was much the same;²

¹ A. Lameth, ii. 321.

² There was a subtle point of difference. Mirabeau drew a distinction between the "legislative power," in which the King was comprised, and the "legislative body," saying that Barnave had "confounded" the two. Barnave held that the King's functions belonged solely to the executive power; that the right of suspensory veto made him "moderator of legislation" but not "legislator". (Speech of 24 March 1791, *Moniteur*, vii. 716, Le Hodey, xxiii. 208). It would seem that

yet when, a year later, he stated it in somewhat similar terms, his enemies reproached him with changing his mind and with repeating the very arguments by which Mirabeau had refuted him. Mirabeau had refuted something which Barnave had never said.

Having thus created a fictitious position Mirabeau grew warmer. Barnave, he said, had never really tackled the question at all; it would be too easy a triumph to follow him into details where, "if he has shown talent he has never shown any of the statesman's knowledge of affairs." (The truth being that Barnave's criticism of details had caused Le Chapelier to remove one dangerous provision bodily from Mirabeau's bill.) "He has declaimed against the evils that may be done and have been done by kings," continued Mirabeau, "he has been very careful not to speak of popular disturbances." 'As for Pericles; would not one think he was a king or a despotic minister? Who was it whom he seduced by his gifts of money?—The National Assembly of Athens!' On this historical point Mirabeau had the best of it. He then went through his own bill, article after article, adopting Le Chapelier's amendments as a matter of course, and interpreting each article according to his new system. After each he cried: "Where is the pitfall here?" Barnave had not used the word, but Mirabeau knew what his colleagues were looking for.¹

It was one of his finest speeches; the point of the difficulty was subtle and he was specious; the generosity of the Assembly was touched by his sudden disfavour. "There was no one who would not have welcomed his return if that return had been complete," says Alexandre Lameth.² As it was, a small minority still held that his bill was inadmissible. Barnave

Mirabeau had been primed with his distinction by Reybaz, who wrote him, at the time of the debate, a 'scrap' which Mirabeau afterwards asked him to alter and enlarge for another occasion (Plan, 101). On the other hand Frochot wrote on the paper of notes used, almost verbatim, by Mirabeau on 22 May, "notes taken by Mirabeau while Barnave was making his speech." (L. Passy, *Frochot, Préfet de la Seine*, p. 3, note.) Mirabeau had heard Barnave in the Jacobins, he had probably talked with Reybaz, and it would be like him to give the honest Frochot to understand that his notes were the inspiration of the moment.

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 438-42.

² A. Lameth, *Examen*, p. 9.

asked for leave to reply, but the Assembly closed the debate. Noailles then moved that Barnave should be heard, and Charles Lameth, Mirabeau and Lafayette supported him. The Assembly might have listened to Barnave alone, but Cazalès announced that he should speak again, and Lafayette claimed the right to answer Barnave. This was too much, and a second vote confirmed the closure.

Twenty-two bills were then read, and Mirabeau's, as amended by Le Chapelier, and Barnave's were singled out.¹ Barnave himself read a new bill, compounded from the bills of Pétion and Menou, which gave the initiative definitely and exclusively to the King.² He could neither speak on the whole question nor answer Mirabeau, and his speech was quite short. Mirabeau's bill, he said, even as amended, did not fulfil the real intention of the Assembly, which was to give the initiative to the King and the decision to the legislative body; because to give the Assembly merely "a negative right over war" was equivalent to giving the King a right to begin war. He remarked on the difference between Mirabeau's bill as amended and the bill he had originally proposed: "as it will remain in the archives of History, there is no need to analyse it."³

Lafayette supported Mirabeau's bill in a short, written speech, in which he used no arguments but spoke of his own services as giving him a right to pronounce his opinion. His influence was decisive,⁴ Mirabeau's bill gained priority and all seemed lost. But there was still a small and dauntless band of resisters, Barnave and his friends and other men of weight, and when the first article was read again, Alexandre Lameth boldly proposed as an amendment, to substitute for it: "War can only be declared by a decree of the legislative body, given on the formal proposition of the King." Over this amendment the battle raged for three hours. The majority of the Assembly intended to consecrate the principle it contained, but they had been dazzled into believing that this principle was sufficiently safeguarded in Mirabeau's amended

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 442.

² *Point du Jour*, x. 173-4; *Journal des Débats*, no. 286, p. 4. It is not in the *Moniteur*.

³ *Moniteur*, iv. 442.

⁴ Le Hodey, xi. 477; *Révolutions de Paris*, iv. 483.

bill, and Mirabeau continued to assure them that it was so safeguarded. The small minority stood firm, determined that the decree should be clear. Fréteau came to the rescue "with courageous perseverance," and when the amendment was on the point of being shelved, Camus struck in, indignant, and so the fight went on.¹ By and by it became evident that the opinion of the Assembly was changing, and at last Mirabeau, seeing how things were going, adopted the amendment, 'with all his heart.' It was needless, he averred, but if he had known that this was only a struggle of "self-love," he would have given way long before. The amendment passed, in a wording suggested by Fréteau, and the decree was enacted thus :

"The right of peace and war belongs to the nation. War can only be decided upon by a decree of the legislative body, which shall be given on the formal and necessary proposal of the King, and shall be afterwards sanctioned by His Majesty."² The rest of the articles passed as they had been amended by Le Chapelier; the noble declaration that France renounced all conquests, which was afterwards made into a separate article of the Constitution, was among them.³ It was nearly six o'clock when the Assembly rose.

As soon as it became known that the question would be decided on Saturday, the excitement of the populace had risen higher than ever. Already bundles of the *Actes des Apôtres* and other aristocratic publications had been carried off from the booksellers and burnt, and on the 22nd, Gattey, in the Palais-Royal, only saved his stock by promising to renounce all profit on aristocratic brochures. An immense crowd filled the Tuileries gardens, the Feuillants, the Capucins, the rue St. Honoré, even the place Vendôme, waiting for the decree, and haggard, angry men moved about from group to group, crying that Mirabeau was sold, and threatening to set Paris on

¹ A. Lameth, *Examen*, 9-13.

² *Procès-verbal*, no. 297, p. 5, vol. xx.

³ Barnave, a firm adherent to this principle, afterwards explained that it must not be interpreted as meaning that France would reject nations who voluntarily wished to join her, nor refrain from conquests if she were attacked—by which he meant carrying the war into the enemy's country, not retaining conquered territory against the inhabitants' wishes (17 Nov. 1790, *Moniteur*, vi. 407).

fire. Bulletins let down from the windows of the Manège on strings enabled the crowd to follow all the fortunes of the day—scraps of paper which were pounced upon, read aloud, copied, and passed on. When the first articles of the decree were announced the joy of the people was frantic; their shouts of delight swelled the applause of the Assembly, and as soon as Barnave came out they seized upon him, and this time carried him in triumph right under the windows of the Tuileries.¹

The popular side had won and Mirabeau had been defeated; nothing could be more certain. Yet extreme democrats, who were dissatisfied with the decree, chose to consider it as a kind of triumph for the Court. 'If the King has the initiative he has everything,' wrote Loustallot; 'he can betray the country to the enemy and still the Assembly would have no right to make war.'² Mirabeau took advantage of these divided opinions to claim the victory and at the same time to put himself in the right with the public. He published his two speeches, with a prefatory address to the administrators of the Departments dated June 1st, and in this address he complained bitterly of the calumnies by which he had been assailed; saying that it was not enough for him that the Assembly had cleared him by adopting his system, almost unanimously; he must clear himself in the eyes of the nation. A great constitutional principle had been made a party question by the selfish intrigues and the slanders of the leaders of a faction, who refused to acknowledge defeat even when beaten, and were applauded by the ignorant crowd whom they had deceived. Could I, he asked, "abandon for the miserable success of a moment, the principle which has made the participation of the King in the formation of the national will one of the bases of the Constitution?" In printing his two speeches he skilfully altered the first to suit the principles he now adopted. Thus, in the passage where he had said that the Assembly could "disapprove of the war" if it were unnecessary, he represented himself as having

¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, iv. 424; *A. Lameth*, ii. 312-13; *Bailli de Virieu*, 194; *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 27, p. 655, and *Carra's*, no. 28, p. 77; *Chronique*, 24 May, p. 575.

² *Révolutions de Paris*, iv. 405, &c., and 477, &c.; cf. *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 28, pp. 665-7.

said, that the Assembly could "approve, decide on war if it were necessary ; disapprove of it if it were unnecessary," and he made many alterations and additions of the same sort. The second speech required no alteration, but he added an outrageous attack to his criticism of Barnave : " He has been very careful not to speak of popular disturbances, though he himself might have furnished an example of the facility with which the friends of a foreign Power can influence the opinion of a National Assembly by raising riots among the people which surrounds it, and by getting their own agents applauded in the public walks." ¹ Barnave calls this " an indecent imputation on me, which would have got him censured by the Assembly if he had made it there, and which he has inserted in his new edition to make people believe that the Assembly heard it without expressing disapproval." ²

The imputation was an allusion to the notion that foreign Powers had been intriguing to have the King deprived of the right of making war. The pamphleteers who attacked the Lameths and their friends as Orleanists, called the whole imaginary coalition " the English party," and pictured them as in league with " Pitt and Fox " over this decree. ³ In the regions of fact the Prussian ambassador, von der Goltz, whose object it was to detach France from Austria and to work against Spain, had, it seems, been manœuvring to influence the popular leaders against the King's prerogative. In one point their interests coincided with his ; both wished for peace and both believed that a decree in the King's favour would mean war and a revival of the King's power. Barnave's consistent attitude on the Spanish alliance proves that he never came under von der Goltz's influence. Pétion may have done so ; but to suppose that either he or any of the revolutionaries were really affected by the manœuvres of von der Goltz ⁴ in

¹ *Discours et Réplique du comte de Mirabeau à l'Assemblée Nationale dans les séances des 20 mai et 22 mai, &c.* (Paris, 44 pp.), p. 33.

² Draft letter. Paris, 13 June. 1790. *A. N. W.* 13. 218.

³ *Lettre de M. Duport à M. Charles Lameth*: " Il faut y faire attention," &c.

⁴ Sybel, i. 221. M. Sorel (ii. 69) refers to M. Max Duncker's " Friedrich Wilhelm II und Graf Hertzberg " (*Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 37 [1877], p. 21). M. Duncker, who wrote from studies in the Berlin Archives, but does not give references, says that Goltz found Pétion so useful

a question which was to them vital, is to misunderstand them. Great movements and great ideas can never be accounted for by the wiles of diplomatists and the intrigues of ministers.

Barnave was both angry and perturbed at Mirabeau's "scandalous manifesto," and felt the necessity of justifying himself. He writes in a long letter to a friend: "If you want to form an idea of M. de Mirabeau's work, take the *Moniteur*, where his speech and his reply are transcribed literally, and compare it with his new edition. . . . This infamous manœuvre has been preceded by numberless artifices to lead public opinion astray, by the corruption of several journals and specially of the *Courrier de l'Europe*, by a swarm of libellous pamphlets in which, by the side of pompous eulogies of M. de Mirabeau and M. de Lafayette, MM. de Lameth, Duport, de Menou, Barnave, Pétion, &c., are represented as disturbers of the peace and men who wish to set up a republic,—the common reproach which, since the beginning of the Revolution, has been incessantly brought against those who have proved incorruptible." Barnave, at this time, was much disappointed at the failure of an attempt he had made to heal divisions (of which we shall speak in the next chapter), and took a needlessly gloomy view of affairs. He goes on: "Public opinion is still entirely for us; and while the aristocrats, the suspected patriots and the newly converted are ranging themselves under the wing of M. de Mirabeau and his new allies, a number of districts have sent deputations to MM. de Lameth and to me;" whereas Mirabeau and Lafayette, "who think that one buys the applause of thirty or forty thousand souls with money," are coldly received.

"Nevertheless this state of things may be ephemeral; public opinion tires, and intrigue never tires;" calumnies are being spread by every means of corruption. He fears that "the ministry will soon have an assured majority in the Assembly. This condition is tolerable in a Legislative Assembly, but in a Constituent Assembly it is absolutely disastrous. The mani-

that the King of Prussia suggested offering him a pension. Goltz is also said to have set Barnave on to speak against the *Pacte de Famille*! If he told his Government this he was romancing indeed.

festation of public opinion can alone save us from this danger ; it alone can keep the majority firm in pure and constitutional principles ; it alone can bring back to the side of the Revolution, and retain there, men who will never venture to sacrifice their reputation when they see that they do not deceive the watchful public. I see men and things at close quarters. You may believe that if the preservative does not come in time, the nation will find itself forced into new insurrections." The "preservative" that Barnave wished for was not to be the voice of the crowd, it appears, but of the local authorities ; and "the occasion for showing public opinion" would arise naturally from Mirabeau's dispatch of his pamphlet to the Administrators.¹

Alexandre Lameth did take the *Moniteur*, and he published two versions of Mirabeau's first speech side by side in parallel columns, with a letter from the editor of the *Moniteur* certifying that Mirabeau's speech and reply had both been printed from manuscripts which he had sent to the paper himself. In one column was the speech as printed in the *Moniteur*, in the other Mirabeau's "new edition." Lameth pointed out each alteration with stinging comments ; he also gave an account of the circumstances.² It was a damning document and no answer was possible.

Barnave, who had looked over the pamphlet,³ sent it to various bodies with a guarantee that the facts were correct. A draft of a letter shows that he probably intended to send a copy to all the departmental administrators as an answer to the work with which Mirabeau had "deluged the kingdom." "If all France had witnessed the facts, as Paris has, it would have been needless to answer him," he wrote ; but the attack had been too "definite," too "boldly calumnious" to be passed over in silence.⁴ He also intended to publish his own speech, with remarks on the various theories propounded in the debates, and says to the Grenoble municipality on June 9th : "If incessant business, from which one must not turn aside to

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. 218 and 219. Draft letter, Paris, 13 June 1790.

² *Examen*, &c. Most of it is printed at the end of Lameth's *History*, vol. ii.

³ An almost illegible draft, corrected in Barnave's hand, is among his papers. *A. N. W.* 13.

⁴ Draft letter, Paris, 5 June 1790. *A. N. W.* 12. 204.

attend to one's private affairs, had allowed of my writing down the speech I made on the same question and getting it printed, I should have done so long since ; I shall see about it when it is possible."¹ But he never found the time.

Mirabeau still tried to pose as the injured party, and began to prosecute a young man, called Lacroix, for writing the pamphlet on his 'treachery,' at the instigation of Barnave and his friends. Mirabeau's accusation of the deputies was probably based on a foolish and apparently anonymous letter which he had received, and he soon dropped his suit.² There was a war of open letters between him and Pétion, who took up the cudgels on his own behalf, and another between Lafayette and Charles Lameth. Mirabeau was reduced to the elementary repartee, *mentiris impudentissime*, and Lafayette was worsted when he replied aggressively to a correct letter, in which Lameth denied the persistent rumour that he wanted Lafayette's place.³ But the strife soon grew less acute, and in the Assembly private disputes were always laid aside.

As a natural consequence of the decree the Assembly found itself obliged to take a large part in the direction of foreign affairs. In July the frontier department of the Ardennes was set in a ferment by the news that Austria had received permission to march troops through French territory, on their way to put down the revolution in Belgium. Montmorin pleaded treaty obligations, but a committee appointed to examine the treaty, and to inquire into the state of the frontier defences, reported so unfavourably, that on July 29th the Assembly voted the appointment of a committee of six, "to examine the treaties existing between France and foreign Powers and the respective engagements resulting from them, in order to report to the Assembly when required." This body, elected on the

¹ *Examen*, p. 8, note ; *A. N. W.* 12. 191. Draft letter, "À messieurs les Officiers municipaux de Grenoble." Paris, 9 June 1790.

² Passy's *Frochot*, p. 37, note ; Montigny, vii. 258-9, note. Desmoulins says (*Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, pp. 310-11) that he first introduced Lacroix to Alexandre in the following August. Lacroix was the writer of the pamphlet.

³ *Lettre de M. Mirabeau l'aîné*, 20 June, p. 14 ; *Moniteur*, iv. 480, 496, 507.

31st, became the Diplomatic Committee.¹ The idea of such a committee was already familiar ; it had been advocated in the Jacobins in March, and several speakers had urged it in the Peace and War debate.² The Assembly looked for prudence and discretion, as well as a certain knowledge of foreign affairs, in the members. Fréteau, who had taken a leading part in founding it, was first on the list ; then came Mirabeau ; the duc du Châtelet, once a Court grandee and now an esteemed and moderate member of the Right ; Barnave, Menou, and d'André. Siéyes's name was only sixth on the supplementary list, after Malouet, A. Lameth, Dupont and Maury.³ While Mirabeau lived he was the usual reporter of the Committee ; after his death his place was taken by Fréteau, and sometimes by Menou.

The Diplomatic Committee was soon called upon to act. Great Britain and Spain were still negotiating, but Pitt was preparing for war on a scale which alarmed France for herself and her colonies, and Spain had already claimed the execution of the "Pacte de Famille" and asked what France was prepared to do. Montmorin did not notify this to the Assembly till Aug. 2nd, and he then asked for an increase of armaments and an answer to Spain. Delay was caused by a false hope that the disputants had come to terms, and it was not till Aug. 25, when the disturbing news that the British fleet was about to set sail had arrived, and fears that France was the real object of the armament had been excited in the minds of the leaders,⁴ that Mirabeau reported for the Committee. He had been doing his best in the meanwhile to induce the Court to have the "Pacte de Famille" drawn up anew, in a form which would ensure its ratification by the Assembly ; indeed in the Diplomatic Committee his open and secret ends appear to have been in harmony, and he gave his colleagues no reason to distrust

¹ *Moniteur*, v. 238, 244, 245, 256.

² Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 27. Mirabeau had definitely proposed it on 24 May (*Moniteur*, iv. 449), but it was then supposed that foreign Powers might take the measure ill. Barnave, in the letter of 13 June already quoted, says that Mirabeau has been trying "to embroil us with several Powers" since the decree on War and Peace, an allusion to this proposal.

³ *Journal des Débats*, no. 368, p. 12.

⁴ de Staël, 171.

him. In a clever report, calculated, he thought, to persuade the Assembly by a little judicious "tacking," he proposed that the defensive clauses of all alliances should remain in force for the present, and that the King should be asked to raise the number of the fleet in commission to thirty.¹ This was equivalent to supporting Spain and maintaining the "Pacte de Famille." The measure did not please the extreme party and it was opposed, though not in a violent manner, by Reubell, Robespierre, and Pétion. Barnave, who had already supported it, both on the Committee and in the Jacobins,² spoke in its favour. He advocated a permanent treaty with Spain, insisting at the same time that France was bound by her renunciation of conquests to keep only to the defensive clauses in her alliances, and that Spain, in the present instance, would not be injured by this restriction, as the offensive clauses of the treaty had been inserted for the benefit of France. He did further service in the debate. A Breton, Botidoux, made a long speech in favour of Spain, besprinkled with tirades against England. It caught the fancy of the Assembly and would probably have been printed if Barnave had not caused the prompt defeat of the motion. He also renewed, but with no success, a proposal of Pétion, that the King should be asked to mediate, if possible, between England and Spain.³

Mirabeau's bill passed, with its scope restricted to the Spanish alliance, and the number of the fleet was raised to forty-five.⁴

This decree, which was extremely unpopular, called forth howls of rage and despair from Fréron and Marat, who considered that Barnave had been seduced by "the infernal serpent," Mirabeau.⁵

¹ Lamarck, ii. 45, 146; *Moniteur*, v. 483.

² *Introduction*, 120. "I supported, in the Diplomatic Committee, in the Jacobins and in the Assembly, the arming of forty-five vessels in favour of Spain, a measure with which public opinion was extremely incensed."

³ 26 Aug., *Moniteur*, v. 490; Le Hodey, xv. 79.

⁴ *Moniteur*, v. 490; *Procès-verbal*, no. 391, vol. 28; cf. Lord Gower's *Despatches*, 26-9.

⁵ Marat, *C'est un Beau Rêve*, p. 6; *Orateur du Peuple*, ii. nos. 18 and 21. Fréron's bill of contents is quite modern: "National Assembly—Mortal blow struck at the Constitution—Disastrous decree for

As for Brissot, he was disposed to lay the chief blame on Barnave himself.¹

In England, where no one had expected the Assembly to support Spain, the news was received with surprise and displeasure, as likely to put fresh heart into Spain and to render the pressure which Pitt was putting on her unavailing. A war, in which France would join, seemed imminent, and Pitt became desirous to convince the National Assembly that his Government had no hostile intentions towards their country. The Ambassador, Lord Gower, could only communicate with the ministers, but an able diplomatist, Hugh Elliot, an early friend of Mirabeau's and an admirer of the Revolution, solved the difficulty by undertaking voluntarily a kind of informal mission. He came to Paris early in October (or even before that), and through the good offices of Mirabeau, with whom all his steps seem to have been concerted, was soon in familiar intercourse with many leading patriots. On his report of their friendly disposition, Pitt sent him a careful letter of instructions. Great Britain, he said, must not be compromised by any step which would look like asking France to mediate, but Elliot should try to induce the popular leaders to make such representations to Spain as would lead her to accept the British terms and to preserve peace. He thought it possible that the Assembly, if pleased with Great Britain, might be persuaded not to support Spain, even supposing she were to refuse the terms; but nothing must be said of an alliance, and assurances must not go further than saying that Great Britain, unless in self-defence, would continue to observe strict neutrality as to the internal affairs of France.

On this, Elliot had a private conference with a deputation of the Diplomatic Committee: Menou, Fréteau, and Barnave. Noailles was present. "Nothing is to be accomplished in France without regular oratorical debate," writes Elliot; and

France—Help of 45 ships of the line granted to Spain—Horrible and Universal War in Europe—Triumph of the Ministers—Consternation of the Patriots—"(no. 18). Fréron says that Mirabeau promised Barnave to oppose the Committee's bill!

¹ *Patriote français*, 18 Nov., p. 1; Brissot's *Lettre à M. Barnave*, 73, 99-100.

he spoke for an hour, explaining the British position and suggesting that Spain was seeking for war "in concert with French malcontents." Barnave replied, making several objections, which Elliot answered to his satisfaction. It would seem from what Lord Gower says, that hopes of an alliance were either implied or hinted at.

Elliot was successful; he evidently convinced the Diplomatic Committee that the Spanish claims in North America were indefensible, and they decided, as their principles bound them to decide, that even if war broke out and Spain claimed help from France, there must be a full investigation into the rights of the case before that help was granted.² They waited on Montmorin to acquaint him with their decision, and evidently signified to him their intention that representations should be made to Spain, in which he concurred. Menou was deputed to inform Elliot of what they had done, and the leaders of the Left made known to Gower, through Elliot, their desire of using their influence in favour of peace. Elliot, on his side, undertook to try to open the eyes of his Government to the solidity of the Revolution, and assured Pitt that the wish of the party in power was for "Eternal Peace and Friendship with England."³

Elliot's mission was supposed to be secret, but as he told Pitt, "there is no such thing as a private negotiation to be carried on here. . . . Everything like a secret is avoided as dangerous;" and the French newspapers were full of his errand, though its exact purport never became public.⁴ He left for

¹ Earl of Stanhope's *Life of the Right Hon. William Pitt* (London, 1861-2), ii. 56, &c., letter of Pitt to Elliot, and letter of Elliot to Pitt of 26 Oct.; J. Holland Rose, *Pitt and National Revival*, 581, &c. Dr. Holland Rose prints some passages of Elliot's letter suppressed by Stanhope. Gower, 38-9 (22 Oct.). No record of Elliot's mission was found among official documents by Mr. Oscar Browning, Gower's editor (see *Gower*, p. 38, note); nor is there any in the Elliot family papers. (See *Memoir of the Rt. Hon. Hugh Elliot* by the Countess of Minto. Edinburgh, 1868, p. 335.)

² J. H. Rose, loc. cit., 580; a passage in Elliot's letter.

³ Gower, 40 (26 Oct.), Stanhope's *Pitt*, ii. 60-1.

⁴ e. g., *Moniteur*, vi. 149, 230, 248, 277; *Le Nouvelliste de France* (by Le Hodey), Oct. and Nov. 1790, pp. 22, 29, 53-4; *Gazette universelle*, 2 Nov. 1349.

England on Oct. 27th. Warlike preparations did not relax after his arrival, and we may feel certain that the well-informed Le Hodey is right when he says that Elliot found the Diplomatic Committee determined to uphold the defensive clauses of the "Pacte de Famille."¹

In the meanwhile Spain had given way. She was on cool terms with her ally, and the mutinies at Nancy and Brest must have shaken her faith in the power of France to help her, even if the will were there. An agreement was signed at Madrid on Oct. 28th,² disarmament followed, and peace was assured.

M. Sorel regards this transaction as a triumph for Pitt at the expense of France, one cannot see why. It was obviously not worth while for France to go to war and imperil the Revolution in order to maintain the chimerical claims of Spain to a monopoly of the west coast of North America. The Assembly showed a firm front when France herself seemed menaced, and was ready to support the ally of France if she were unjustly attacked. Farther than this the true interests of France surely forbade her representatives to go. Six months later Barnave declared in the Assembly, that the decree which maintained the "Pacte de Famille" had saved France from war. What he said about England at the same time indicates his belief that Pitt had intended to make war upon an isolated France, after dealing separately with Spain, and had been prevented by their union.³ This is enough to show that the Diplomatic Committee were not the dupes of Pitt and had no intention of breaking the defensive alliance.

¹ *Le Nouvelliste de France*, 29, 36, 54.

² *Moniteur*, vi. 369; the date is confirmed by the *Annual Register*.

³ Sorel, ii. 95; Le Hodey, xxv. p. 419 and *Moniteur*, viii. 376 (Barnave on 11 May 1791, see below, II. 67-8, 76). Dr. Rose and Mr. Oscar Browning find the episode so puzzling that they can only account for it by bribery, and Dr. Rose alleges in support of this theory some words in Elliot's letter to Pitt: "What has taken place in my more intimate conversations with individuals cannot be committed to paper," and some random suggestions of Gower (p. 29) and the English agent, Miles.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FEDERATION

THE Federation was the expression of that new idea of fraternity among Frenchmen in which the ancient differences between province and province, man and man, were obliterated, and of devotion to the Revolution which had made such fraternity possible. The movement began on Nov. 29th, 1789, when the National Guards of twenty places in Dauphiné and the small contiguous state of the Vivarais met together near Valence, and swore to remain united for ever in the support of the laws made by the National Assembly.¹ The idea spread over France; the "civic oath" taken by the Assembly on Feb. 4th increased the popular desire to manifest solidarity with the Revolution, and National Guards held "Federation" after "Federation" in gatherings large and small. It was felt that the anniversary of the Revolution could not be more fitly celebrated than by a great meeting in Paris. The Paris authorities took up the notion warmly, the King gave his consent, the Assembly approved, the Right joining here with the Left. Early in June it was decreed that deputies from the National Guards of every department, from every regiment in the army, and from the navy, should swear a covenant of Federation together in Paris, on July 14th.²

¹ *Acte d'Union des Gardes Nationales de vingt Villes, Bourgs, Villages et Communautés du Vivarais et du Dauphiné. Du 29 nov. 1789* (n. p., 21 pp.) (B. M. F. 298.) The guards of Saillans, commanded by Barnave's cousin, were present.

² The oath was: "We swear to remain faithful for ever to the nation, the law, and the king; to maintain with all our power the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the king; to protect, conformably to the laws, the safety of persons and property, the free circulation of grains and provisions in the interior of the kingdom, and the collection of public taxes under whatever form they exist; to remain united with all Frenchmen in the indissoluble bonds of fraternity." *Moniteur*, v. 44.

Every one began to prepare for the great festival. Barnave's idea was to turn the enthusiasm of the moment to account in the interests of unity. If the Left would only put aside their disastrous differences and come to an agreement, the Constitution might be speedily finished. Therefore, on Sunday, June 6th, he proposed to the Jacobins in his most persuasive manner, that all members of the Society who were deputies to the National Assembly should be invited to an extraordinary meeting on Monday, to consult on the means of completing the constitutional decrees before July 14th, so that the Constitution could be solemnly sworn to by the general Federation.¹ He added that if this were done it would be possible to fix a date when the Assembly could dissolve.

A meeting was accordingly held on the 7th, another on the 9th, and the Jacobins went so far as to offer to exclude outsiders altogether until the Constitution was finished. But to Barnave's great disappointment, obstacles were raised by four or five opponents of the Jacobin leaders, and nothing came of the effort after reunion, except the definite return of most of the deputies who had joined the "1789" Club.²

But though the Left remained disunited, the Assembly celebrated the anniversary and marked its faith in Equality and Fraternity by one of its most revolutionary decrees. On the evening of June 19th there appeared at the bar a deputation, said to consist of foreigners of many nations, dressed in their own costumes, and led by the Prussian Baron, Cloots. They came to offer their congratulations and to beg to be allowed to witness the coming ceremony in the Champ de Mars. A wave of enthusiasm swept over the Assembly; in those days of exaltation a self-appointed mission from the nations of the earth to France, the harbinger of liberty and brotherhood, did not seem unnatural, and Menou, who was presiding, bade the deputation relate what they had seen

¹ The *Chronique*, 8 June, p. 635, reproduces a note by Barnave (in his hand among his papers, *A. N. W.* 13).

² *Courrier extraordinaire*, 8 June 1790, p. 4; a note (*A. N. W.* 13. 126), among Barnave's papers; his draft letter of 13 June (*A. N. W.* 13. 219), and his letter of 30 June, *Lettre*, 416.

when they returned to their own countries. Alas! it was whispered before long, that some of them would have to return no further than the streets of Paris. But the Assembly was quite ignorant of the deception, and Menou, who had been officially informed of the deputation, had told no one what was going to happen, not even his friends.¹

The incident was hardly over and the deputies were still under the spell of the feelings it had excited, when Alexandre Lameth rose to make a motion. He reminded the Assembly that at the feet of the statue of Louis XIV, in the place des Victoires, were chained figures representing the four provinces which that monarch had conquered. What could be more offensive to the deputies of these provinces, who were coming to Paris? Let the statues be removed before the 14th, together with all such "monuments of slavery."² Up jumped an obscure deputy, Lambel, forestalling Goupil de Préfelne, who had a motion ready: "To-day is the tomb of vanity," he said, and proposed to abolish all titles, from duke downwards. The nobles vied with each other in supporting Lambel. He was seconded by Charles Lameth, who said: "Hereditary nobility is incompatible with true liberty, it shocks reason, there can be no civil equality, no virtuous emulation" where it exists. Let the use of titles be forbidden in official acts; if people still choose to use such "puerile distinctions" unofficially, "public opinion will place them among those who do not yet understand our blessed Revolution."³ Lafayette supported, "with all his heart," and when Foucauld asked how men who had saved the State would be rewarded, answered finely, that they would be rewarded by having saved the State. He also proposed to abolish the title of Prince. Noailles

¹ A. Lameth, ii. 433. See on the composition of the deputation, G. Avenel, *A. Cloots, l'Orateur du Genre Humain*, i. 179 (Paris, 1865). The Arab and Chaldean were two French Professors.

² The minds of the Jacobins were exercised about statues this June. The Club printed a proposal of J. B. Rouziés, on the 29th, that all statues of kings should be veiled till they had passed a kind of national examination. (*B. M. F.* 343, "motion faite par J. B. Rouziés," &c., 3 pp.)

³ I have followed a version of this speech written out by Barnave (*A. N. W.* 13); it appeared in the *Moniteur* (iv. 676), with some slight differences.

chimed in, protesting against "vain titles, the frivolous offspring of pride and vanity. . . . Do we say, the Marquis of Franklin, Earl Washington, Lord Fox?" And because he could not allow himself to be left out in the cold, he moved that incense in churches should be burnt solely in honour of the Deity, and that liveries should be forbidden. Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau proposed that every one should be known only by his family name, and set the example by dropping "de Saint-Fargeau" on the spot. The young count Mathieu de Montmorency moved the abolition of armorial bearings.

Maury, who made himself the champion of aristocracy, opposed in a speech that was both serious and sarcastic. He declared that in France the monarchy was bound up with the noblesse; he also begged to call attention to the statue of Henri IV, which had chained slaves at its feet. But as these slaves represented the vices, perhaps the lovers of liberty would not object to them. Faucigny tried for an adjournment; Barnave demanded a decision before the Assembly rose, which was all the part he took in the debate. Lafayette supported him, and all the motions were voted, a few members of the Right protesting.

One circumstance illustrates that susceptibility to the claims of justice and mercy which the Assembly always showed, even in its most excited moments. Virieu, speaking pluckily against attempts to shout him down, insisted on calling attention to the danger that the populace might think themselves free to destroy coats of arms on châteaux, churches, and tombs; and he was supported by Fréteau, who said also that time must be allowed to make fresh clothes for the wearers of liveries. An article was therefore put in the decree, forbidding citizens to lay hands on any monuments or decorations, public or private, or on the charters and title-deeds of families, and providing for time to make clothes for liveried servants and to efface armorial bearings.¹

In enacting this decree, the Assembly was only carrying out an idea which had become fairly general. The abolition of titles had long been considered a logical consequence of the

¹ *Moniteur*, iv. 675-9, 680.

abolition of other distinctions,¹ and men like the Lameths and d'Aiguillon had practically dropped theirs already.

But no sooner had the decree been passed, than a reaction took place among some of its supporters. Lafayette and his friends, who had originally only intended to abolish hereditary titles, felt that they had gone too far, and Condorcet told them that their decree was contrary to liberty, which would allow any one to assume any distinctions he pleased. Accordingly Lafayette and Necker did their best to persuade the King to delay his sanction, and to make representations which might lead to modifications. But Louis, pressed by other advisers, accepted on the 23rd, with the object of getting a bad decree that would sow dissensions made law. So, at least, say both Lafayette and Lameth.² The majority of the nobles, who clung to their titles in a way that Frenchmen imbued with the revolutionary spirit could not understand, were further alienated from the Revolution, and thus much harm was certainly done.

The forced assumption of the family name was a gallant attempt to put an end to the chaotic system under which, as Laroche-foucauld had said, "no man in France was known by his own name."³ It was interpreted in a broad spirit. The journalists carried it out to the letter, and gleefully wrote of Mirabeau and Lafayette as Riquetti l'aîné and Motier, but in the Assembly they were known by their old names. D'Aiguillon kept his, with a plain Monsieur before it, and as far as one can see any one who was so well known by a title that a change would have been puzzling did the same. Only extremists insisted on docking the "de," and Barnave continued to speak and write of "M. de Mirabeau," "M. de Cazalès," and often of "M. de Lameth," though the Lameths had dropped the prefix.

The anniversary of the oath in the Jeu de Paume was

¹ A. Lameth (ii. 445-6) says that the élite of the Tiers were anxious for it, while the people were indifferent.

² *Procès-verbal*, no. 333, p. 26, vol. 23; A. Lameth, ii. 447; Lafayette, ii. 473 (reprint of letter from the *Armoire de fer*); *Table générale . . . des décrets de l'Assemblée nationale rendus en 1789 et 1790* (Baudouin, Paris, 1791), p. 57.

³ A. Lameth, ii. 439.

celebrated by two banquets ; one, rich and costly, given by the " 1789 " Club ; the other, plain and frugal, given by the " Society of the Oath of the Tennis-Court," over which the stern republican, Romme, presided. This Society repaired to Versailles in the morning, placed in the tennis-court a brass and marble tablet inscribed with the oath,¹ and returned to Paris after the ceremony, to hold a feast at Ranelagh, a place of entertainment in the Bois de Boulogne. Twenty deputies, all of the advanced party, were present, Barnave, the Lameths, d'Aiguillon, Menou, Beauharnois and Robespierre being the most important ; and the party, which numbered two hundred, included some of the " Victors of the Bastille," many women distinguished for revolutionary fervour, and many eminent patriots, Danton among them.

The company sat down to a dinner of the simplest fare ; Romme, by way of grace, declaiming the first article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. A meditative silence was observed during the meal, and the guests contemplated the busts of Rousseau, Franklin, and Montesquieu which adorned the table. At dessert, while a speech in honour of the National Assembly was making, the ladies stole out, and presently returning in procession, placed wreaths of oak on the heads of the deputies ; at which signal the excitable Society burst into loud exclamations, and even shed tears of gratitude over these " fathers of their country." The deputies entered into the spirit of the scene. Menou and d'Aiguillon professed their joy at finding themselves among a society which breathed the very spirit of equality, on the day after the Assembly had " trampled on titles and prerogatives." Danton then gave as a toast : " Liberty, and the union of all the nations of the Universe ; " other toasts followed—one to the King, the restorer of liberty. Charles Lameth proposed the patriots of France and of other countries ; Robespierre, all writers who had suffered for liberty ; another deputy, the ladies. After this, Alexandre Lameth requested that the deputies present

¹ See *Détail des circonstances relatives à l'inauguration du monument placé le 20 juin 1790 dans le Jeu de Paume*, p. 11. The tablet is still there, behind Bailly's statue. It was fixed in its place with stones from the Bastille.

might be allowed to join the Society; Danton announced his intention of proposing the admission of the members of the Society to the Jacobins; Menou and several others promised to support him. Then a model of the Bastille was placed in the middle of the table; the Victors of the Bastille fell on it with drawn swords, and out came a child, with a pike and a bonnet of liberty, who crowned the Victors with laurel. Copies of the Declaration of Rights were extracted from the ruins of the Bastille and presented to the guests, and the banquet ended with the recital of a patriotic poem, after which the deputies withdrew.¹

In the open-hearted and expansive days of 1790, this banquet is a strange foretaste of the esoteric spirit which was to mark some later phases of the Revolution. No feeling for proportion, no saving sense of humour keeps that spirit in check; already it revels in the gloomy fraternity which does not care to hold the common, cheerful intercourse of life with its brothers; to-morrow it will be enforcing "fraternity or death." It would be ludicrous, if we did not know how soon it was to be terrible.

Barnave, who had been more concerned with the oath of the tennis-court than any other person present, did not speak. The alarming side of the manifestation struck both him and the Lameths. They went for a walk in the Bois de Boulogne and talked over what they had just seen. The complete silence of so many ardent enthusiasts, the touch of sombre puritanism, seemed ominous to them. For the first time they felt some fears for the future of the Revolution, caused not by its enemies but by its friends.²

It was a passing shadow. The grace and gaiety of old France still blended happily with the revolutionary spirit, and a short while after, all classes and all professions joined

¹ *Détail des circonstances, &c.*, 17-25 (*extrait des procès-verbaux de la Société du Serment du Jeu de Paume*). Incorrect versions of the proceedings had appeared, says this *Procès-verbal* (p. 89) In one of these Barnave is made to speak. The banquet made some noise and a number of pamphlets talk of it as a dinner given by Charles Lameth to the poissardes.

² A. Lameth, ii. 449-50, note. He says that Duport was with them, but Duport was not at the banquet; Laborde was.

together and laboured joyfully side by side in the Champ de Mars, like one big family, to finish the works in time for the Federation.

But the Federation, like all popular movements, might bring dangers with it, and it behoved the Assembly to be prepared for them. The deputies were to attend the festival in a body, and it seemed only too likely that in the general enthusiasm they might be prevailed upon to pass some sudden and perhaps unwise resolution; especially as projects of unconstitutional resolutions, to be submitted during the ceremony, were in circulation. Barnave saw what might happen, and the prudent decree, that during the ceremonies of the Federation the Assembly would neither receive addresses and petitions nor pass resolutions outside its usual sitting-place, was due to his foresight.¹ His eloquence was also the determining factor in carrying a bill concerning the King's part in the Federation, submitted by the Constitutional Committee and hostile to the wishes of the King; and Camille Desmoulins thanked heaven that Barnave had escaped "the epidemic of servility which has made such frightful ravages in the National Assembly."²

It was his conduct here, taken in conjunction with Mirabeau's insincere comments on his War and Peace speech, which gave him a reputation as an opponent of royalty; a reputation which led to the accusation that he had changed his opinion when he defended the monarchy a year later.

As a matter of fact, Barnave's views on the monarchy never varied from first to last; he was always thoroughly imbued with the idea of a constitutional King, whose power must be kept within strict limits, but whose rights within these limits must be upheld, while his dignity must be maintained. Thus, when the Constitutional Committee proposed, in October 1789, to pay the King by a grant, annually renewed, he joined with Mirabeau in insisting that there must be a fixed Civil List, saying that the article which put the King "at the mercy of the Assembly" and "restricted his administration" was wanting in respect "for the majesty of the King and the

¹ 4 July, *Point du Jour*, xi. 389-90; *Moniteur*, v. 44.

² *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 34, p. 471-2.

nation," and was a direct incitement to tyranny.¹ Again, when Virieu objected that the King was left out of the oath which it was proposed that the National Guards should take, to be faithful to the Constitution, the nation, and the law, Barnave answered that the King's name was implied in the word "Constitution," "since the King is an integral and essential part of the Constitution of the realm," and that the King's majesty was perhaps more enhanced when he was "blended with the Constitution" than when he was "detached and separated from it."² Again, a little later, when the King wrote, in his own name, a letter about some financial arrangement which he wished the Assembly to carry out, Barnave, who agreed with other speakers that the King's step was unconstitutional, laid down the doctrine of ministerial responsibility thus: "There is one primary maxim; it is that the person of the King is sacred and inviolable and that he ought to receive the most profound and the most constant respect from every one. But from the very inviolability of the King, it results that no proposal must be made by the ministers in the King's name, unless it bears the counter-signature of one of his council. As the inviolability of the King places him above all attacks, the ministers might find in it a way to elude their responsibility. One of two things would then happen; either the respect due to the royal majesty would be impaired by discussion, or the interests of the nation would be compromised and betrayed. . . . The King must always give the name of a responsible councillor who acts for him."³

To the Court, with its notions of Divine Right, the doctrine of constitutional royalty was even more distasteful than republicanism, and the peculiarity of the relations between King and Assembly was never more marked than at the time of the Federation. The position taken up by the Constituent Assembly depended on the axiom, that when a constitution is being made, everything in the political order is in the melting-

¹ 7 Oct. 1789. Le Hodey, iv. 406.

² 7 Jan. 1790, *Journal de Paris*, 9 Jan., 33.

³ 26 March 1790, Le Hodey, ix. 473; cf. *Point du Jour*, viii. 180. This long and important speech (*Courrier Français*, 27 March 1790, 211) is barely noticed in the *Moniteur*.

pot; "all powers return to their source," as Barnave put it, and the nation, being the sole power, "can alone dictate laws and rules." But as it is impossible for a whole nation to make a constitution, the nation hands over all its powers to an assembly of representatives, chosen for that purpose: the "Constituent Body from whom the King himself receives his authority."¹ On the other side, the partisans of royal prerogative argued that the King had existed before the Constitution; and here was the real point of the difficulty with Louis XVI. When he received his powers afresh from the nation, in a limited form, he was already in possession of unlimited powers; and that by no aggression of his own but by a right in which the nation had appeared to acquiesce. He might therefore not unreasonably consider himself justified in using every opportunity to regain something of what he had lost. Hence he was regarded with suspicion as well as affection, and while all honour was paid him, possible encroachments on his part were guarded against with jealous care. Had Louis thrown himself honestly into his new rôle he would soon have lived down suspicion; had he been consistently opposed to the Revolution he would soon have made himself impossible. As it was, the revolutionaries had good grounds for hoping that, circumstances compelling, he would eventually resign himself to being a constitutional King. They knew that if left to himself he would have had no disinclination when once he had made the plunge.² They knew also that he never was left to himself, and put down every equivocal act of his to evil influences.

Louis had ostensibly come over to the side of the Assembly. On Feb. 4th he had voluntarily visited the Manège to express his adherence to the Revolution; to the dismay of the aristocratic party and the delight of the majority. Mirabeau, however, as well as Barnave and the Lameths, thought that the step might be only a bid for popularity on the part of the

¹ Barnave on 9 July, *Moniteur*, v. 89 and 9 Jan. 1790, *Courrier de Provence*, no. 90, p. 19.

² Such different observers as Jefferson and Goguelat (the royal aide-de-camp), thought this. (Jefferson, i. 101; Goguelat, *Mémoires*, p. 293, in *Mémoires pour Tous*, iii. Paris, 1834, &c.).

King's advisers, which did not indicate a real change of policy,¹ and Barnave writes that the King's speech "has given the persons who are most opposed to the Revolution a natural pretext for seeming to change their conduct, and in consequence a powerful means of stopping the mouths of the patriots, of frequently gaining concessions from their enthusiasm, or at least of making them feel a security which is very dangerous."² The bad reception given to 'patriot' deputies who made a point of attending the royal "coucher" on the joyful occasion, may well have confirmed their suspicions.

The King's declaration had strengthened his position, and the Constitutional Committee, as well as the Jacobins, were afraid that he might use the outburst of loyalty which the Federation was sure to provoke, to strike a blow at the Constitution. Therefore, on July 9th, Target introduced a bill, which invited the King to take command of the National Guards and the troops on the 14th; fixed his place during the ceremony—in the middle of the National Assembly, with the President on his right and no intermediaries between him and the deputies—and prescribed the oath he was to take, beginning, "I, first citizen and King of the French."³ These articles, intended to emphasize the dependence of the King's authority upon the Constituent Assembly, which represented the nation, and also to baffle the suspected ambition of the Queen,⁴ were not well received.

Maury made a great impression with an able and moderate speech in which he opposed them. 'The King,' he said, 'is already the head of all the forces; to ask him to take command of them is to imply that some one else might have been asked, and would show a great want of respect. Of course there can be no intermediaries between the King and the Assembly, and it is right that the King should sit by the President. But the Queen and the Dauphin ought to be honoured too; there

¹ Lamarck, i. 464; A. Lameth, i. 323-6; Lafayette, iii. 211; de Staël, 154; Fersen, i. 76.

² A. N. W. 13. 224^B. Draft of portion of letter, undated.

³ *Moniteur*, v. 88.

⁴ Lafayette (iii. 213-14) says that she wished to sit on a throne by the King, and that there was a movement to place her beside him on the 14th.

is no question here of "a hierarchy of powers;" the King will like to have his family with him and their natural place is by his side. Further, the Assembly ought not to dictate the King's oath to him; why should he not use the same formula as his people?' The President, de Bonnay, added to the impression produced by Maury, by saying that the King had told him that he meant to bring his family to the Federation.

Barnave answered: 'Certainly no one but the King ought to be in command on the 14th; but the Federation is an exceptional act which can only take place while the Constitution is making; it comes under no previous law, and a decree must therefore be enacted for the circumstance. Besides, the Constitution has not as yet appointed the King immediate head of the National Guards. In ordinary circumstances the royal family may be set apart, but in a national ceremony, where the different powers are represented, all distinctions must be reserved for the holders of public offices. To place any intermediaries between the King and the Assembly would be "to destroy the constitutional unity." And seeing that the King is to swear as King, and that his functions differ from those of any other, he must take a different oath. Nor must he swear as "first citizen"; the word "citizen" implies equality, "first citizen" is a contradiction in terms.' Barnave's arguments were too severely logical, but it will be seen that there was nothing anti-monarchical in them.

The Committee's articles passed after a long debate, the King being begged "to give his orders for the suitable placing of the royal family." Barnave gained one of his many triumphs over Malouet by exposing the fallacy in a specious amendment which Malouet tried to slip through; also, by returning to the charge, he procured the deletion of the words "first citizen" from the King's oath.¹ Mirabeau took no part in the debate; he was planning how the King could gain most advantage from the Federation, and eclipse Lafayette.

The fourteenth was now at hand. Paris was full of "Fédérés"

¹ *Moniteur* v. 88-9, 92. The Committee proposed to fix the King's place in all ceremonies, and the question whether the decree, as passed, had been meant to apply to all, gave rise to hot debates on the 10th. It was finally made to apply to the Federation only.

as they were called, eagerly welcomed as friends and brothers ; the Champ de Mars was ready, the ceremonial had been arranged. It is to be presumed that the contractors for paving Paris, who had seized the opportunity of taking up all the streets round the Palais Royal the week before, had been persuaded to lay them again, and even such a detail as a request to ladies not to come in big hats which would prevent others from seeing had not been forgotten.¹ The weather had been rainy since the end of June, and the fourteenth was the wettest morning that ever came to spoil a festival, but the sunshine of joy and love in every heart had placed the French far above the reach of rain and storm. Even the weather report records, with a touching inaccuracy, " beautiful day, especially between five and six, afternoon." ²

A deputy, writing in the *Journal de Paris*, gives an account of how the Assembly fared. The deputies met at nine, and waited in the Manège for an hour and a half, until Lafayette sent word that the first part of the procession, which had begun to form at six o'clock, was nearing the place Louis XV. They then sallied out into the Tuileries gardens, into the central walk near the big fountain, to be ready ; and there " between two waters," the sodden earth and the torrents of falling rain, they arranged themselves, as well as they could, in the order of march, two lines of two abreast each, and waited. Those who had umbrellas sheltered two or three others under them and all got wet. But to the happy " everything turns easily into joy " and they only laughed at their sorry plight. At length the procession came into the great square, and they marched out, between the two high terraces and over the *pont tournant*, to take their place, immediately after two battalions of young military recruits and aged veterans ; the future and the past. The whole route was lined with double and treble rows of spectators, wet through and singing ; the branches of the trees in the Cours la Reine were crowded with people, and so were the roofs of the houses further on. The rain held off for a little ; they crossed the Seine on a bridge of boats and the vista of the Champ de

¹ *Chronique*, 8 and 12 July 1790, pp. 754, 770.

² *Journal de Paris*, 16 July, p. 795.

Mars opened before them in all its glory ; with its fine triumphal arch as portal, its large covered gallery for King, Assembly, and other dignitaries at the opposite end ;¹ its terraced seats all round, filled with an innumerable throng ; its huge " altar of the fatherland " in the middle, National Guards on the lower steps and more than sixty white-robed priests on the higher. At this moment the rain came down with redoubled fury, and all round the Champ de Mars the umbrellas went up, like " a roof of many-coloured taffetas." The deputies splashed to their seats and got into shelter.²

The rain soon stopped, but only for a moment ; and as the long procession wound its way into the arena, shower followed shower in quick succession. The priests on the altar-steps were drenched, the *Fédérés* were drenched, and no one heeded ; the frequent deluges were laughingly called " an aristocratic storm in five acts,"³ and the *Fédérés* beguiled the time and defied the weather by dancing and singing—behaviour which most people thought inspiring and some few disorderly. By four o'clock, when every one had arrived, the rain had stopped ; by and by the sun came out for a little. Talleyrand celebrated mass and blessed the oriflamme and the banners of the eighty-three departments ; Lafayette mounted the steps of the altar to the sound of trumpets, and took the oath for the *Fédérés* ; it was the greatest moment of his life. The King took his oath in the gallery ; the President and the Assembly took theirs ; the crowd cheered the King, Queen, and Dauphin again and again. Foreigners like the Baron de Staël could understand that the same people who, " drunk with love," cried *Vive le roi !* to-day, " would let themselves be killed to-morrow to prevent his having some prerogative or other."⁴ But the cheers did not teach Louis that no king is so much loved and so secure as the truly constitutional king ; they raised false hopes in his breast. Last came the *Te Deum* ; the National Guards mounted the steps to touch the sacred altar ; the ceremony was over, and the deputies, after marching back

¹ Behind the central throne was a box for the royal family.

² *Journal de Paris*, 15 July, pp. 791-3.

³ Gorsas, xiv. 201.

⁴ de Staël, 15 July, *Correspondance diplomatique*, 166.

to the Manège in a body, could return home, cold, hungry, weary, joyful. They had seen with their eyes united France ; they had helped to inaugurate a new, bright epoch in the history of the world.¹

Who has not known a day, beautiful in itself, more beautiful still because it seemed the opening of some new era of peace, or justice, or happiness ? Who has not known such a day prove to have been no opening, but the culminating point of a time that was already about to pass away ? No nation has ever again stood where France stood in that summer of 1790.

¹ *Journal de Paris*, 791-4 ; *Moniteur*, v. 129, 199 ; *Procès-verbal*, no. 349, vol. 25.

CHAPTER XVII

BARNAVE AND CAZALÈS

No element that makes a parliament great was wanting to the Constituent Assembly, and it was especially fortunate in having as one of the leaders of the minority a man so noble and so gifted as Cazalès.

Born in 1758, the son of a Councillor of the Parlement of Toulouse, he belonged to a family only newly ennobled. He was put into the army when quite a boy and led the ordinary life of the gay young soldier in provincial garrison towns. His friend Montlosier heard many tales of his laziness, his heedlessness, his love of dissipation and pleasure, from his brother officers, who believed that he had never had the patience to read a book right through. But as he was a devotee of Montesquieu and had reflected much on public questions and the various forms of government, he must have read more than they supposed. Moreover, Montlosier testifies that he never forgot what he did read, that he 'understood by intuition' what others have to learn, and that though he was by nature extremely lazy, because he cared about few things, he could be ardent in pursuit when his interest was roused, and would then take infinite trouble.¹ He had the reputation of being dissipated, but nothing worse than gambling is definitely laid to his charge.

He was a tall, stout man, with a "large and rather ugly" face, badly marked by small-pox, but redeemed by bright and fiery eyes. His voice was strong, his gestures animated, his bearing was not that of the aristocrat of old race, but he had a "frank and resolute" air which made him imposing. He was untidy in person to the last degree; his coats were shabby, his hats so old that they hardly 'deserved the name of hat,' and he kept his breeches in place by hitching them up continually. He is said to have been remarkably like Charles

¹ Montlosier, 235-6.

James Fox in face and figure, and the duc de Lévis writes that the likeness extended to voice and manner of speaking in public.¹ Like Fox, he was a man of many friends, and he deserved to be, for his word was his bond. Yet, for all his friends, he was not only independent but lonely. He consulted no one. "In all his life he never asked any one what to think or what to do," says Montlosier; "his friends were companions, sometimes instruments, never advisers." He detested Maury, who tried to claim him as a disciple, and his disgust when the abbé ran to embrace him after one of his great speeches was unconcealed.²

His opinions, which broadened as time went on, were a curious mixture of extreme conservatism and liberalism. Twice he missed his election to the States-General because his views were too advanced;³ yet he opposed the union of the Orders vehemently. His talents brought him to the front in the Chamber of the Nobles, and as one of the 'Conciliatory Commissaries' he rather overpowered his brethren. During their conferences with the Commons he had his first encounters with Barnave, and the spirit of the two men comes out vividly in a few words that passed between them. "If we are not to be carried from innovation to innovation and from new doctrine to new doctrine and so be led into anarchy, we must entrench ourselves behind precedents and principles," cried Cazalès. And Barnave answered: "That no doctrine is new when it is founded on good sense, which is eternal."⁴

When the Orders united, Cazalès left the Assembly, but he soon returned and discovered that he was an orator. As he could not endure to be mediocre, he practised speaking assiduously with his friend the baron de Batz, overcame his nervousness, and rose rapidly to the first rank.⁵ Eager, vehement, impassioned, he poured out burning thoughts in floods of pure and finished eloquence. He is the "Royalist" of our early ideals, the disinterested enthusiast for royalty so

¹ Ibid., 244; de Lévis, *Souvenirs*, 234-5. ² Montlosier, 93, 264.

³ Aulard, *Orateurs de l'Assemblée constituante*, 270-1.

⁴ *Procès-verbal des Conférences, &c.*, 205-6 and *Point du Jour* (27 avril-17 juin 1789); p. 322.

⁵ Montlosier, 236. Montlosier's assertion that Barnave had to practise in the same way is erroneous.

seldom realized in history. "What do the enemies of royal prerogative want? Do they hope to overturn the throne on which the descendants of Clovis have been seated for fourteen centuries? A goodly portion of the nation will bury itself beneath the ruins, and twenty years of crime will not end this disastrous Revolution." He pleads the virtues of the King with chivalrous ardour, he throws down his glove for the Queen in the face of the Assembly: "Infamous assassins have imperilled the days . . . of the Queen of the French, of the daughter of Maria-Theresa, of that woman whose renowned name will float above the oblivion to which you have consigned the obscure names of the victims and the agents of the Revolution." No one can defend old institutions and put the case against democratic government like Cazalès, no one can better picture the tyranny of popular assemblies and the crimes of republics. Nor are his speeches merely fine rhetoric; it was justly observed by an opponent after the debates on the appointment of the judges, that both Cazalès and Barnave had shown "that they understand the great art of combining eloquence with reasoning."¹

Cazalès was quite devoid of personal ambition; he took no pains to shine in society and frequented it but little; he did not even care how his speeches were reported.² He was candid and open to conviction in a way that often disconcerted his own party, and whenever he thought fit he would agree with the Left. "He was the more esteemed because it was known that he did not fight for what he thought expedient, but for what he thought right," says one who had known him, and Duquesnoy remarks that though by no means a democrat he was far from being an aristocrat, and got into trouble with his own side by remonstrating with them on their turbulent behaviour.³ Loyal in all things he was loyal to the Assembly and cared much for its dignity and honour; he had, too, a certain belief in the new order, and continued to hope for a constitution which would make France happy; for the interest

¹ 7 May 1790, *Moniteur*, iv. 307; 7 Aug. 1790, *Moniteur*, v. 336; *Journal de Paris*, 8 May, p. 513.

² Montlosier, 244; A. V. Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire* (Paris, 1833), i. 221.

³ Arnault, 219; Duquesnoy, ii. 329.

of his country always came first with him. His fearless frankness with friend and foe is one of his most attractive qualities. "I say what I please, I am not accountable to any one," he said once, when he had offended the Left by telling them that they wanted to turn the King into the head of a party. "I know how to submit myself to decrees when they have been passed, but before that I say what I think of them." He was quick to feel anything like a departure from the open, generous tone of the Assembly, and interrupted Charles Lameth on an occasion when he was speaking in a demagogic style of plots and of the duty of the Assembly to listen to reports about them. "I demand that M. de Lameth shall prove the plots he indicates," said Cazalès; "the only object of these assertions is to frighten the citizens, and nothing is more culpable." He had previously called Robespierre to order for a similar offence in an even sharper manner.¹

Yet with all his respect for the Assembly Cazalès was continually carried away by his feelings, and his voice was often loud in the tumult when the Right was at its noisiest. One of these ebullitions led to his famous duel with Barnave.

The two had often hit each other hard in the tribune, but there was no ill-will between them; they had much in common and they respected and liked each other. Barnave admired Cazalès, and Cazalès used to tell his friends that he regarded Barnave as "the first talent in the Assembly." Nevertheless he allowed himself to be persuaded into forcing a duel upon Barnave.

There was a widespread feeling that duelling was wrong, a barbarous relic of feudal customs which ought to go with the rest, and Grouvelle, an eminent member of the Jacobins, had published a pamphlet against it² which was much admired; but the prejudice died hard and duels were still frequent. Barnave, it must be confessed, did not start with enlightened

¹ 9 July 1790, *Moniteur*, v. 90; 17 May 1790, *Moniteur*, iv. 394; 21 Oct. 1789, *Le Hodey*, v. 121. Charles Lameth, in the excess of his zeal, was inclined to be credulous about plots, and gave satisfaction to Marat by the way in which he handed on to the Comité des Recherches the indications of one which Marat brought to his notice (*Ami du Peuple*, 19 Aug. 1790, p. 7; see also Marat's pamphlet "C'en est fait de nous.").

² *Point de duel ou point de Constitution*; see *Moniteur*, vi. 556.

views on the subject, for he illustrates the good citizenship of the Lameths to his mother by telling her that "one of them (the comte) has at last put an end to the bad jokes which the aristocracy was always making on the sure and active way in which the former Comité des Recherches carried out its duties. Yesterday morning he gave M. de la Bourdonnaie three sword-cuts, in consequence of a quarrel which had arisen on the subject." And after speaking of another duel between the Dauphinois Blancard and a member of the Right, he adds: "These events must not give you any uneasiness; it does not seem as if the aristocracy intended to make them common, and I think the other side is very much its superior in all kinds of courage."¹

Lameth and his antagonist had made up their quarrel, the result of a dispute at the Club Valois, but la Bourdonnaye came back to say that "the ladies" insisted on a fight.² Indeed "the aristocracy" did not leave the Left much choice. Mirabeau had the courage to refuse to fight while the Assembly was sitting, but we do not hear that his good example was followed, and there were many duels between deputies. The prince de Poix fought the comte de Lambertye; Dufraisie-Duchey fought Blancard in November; Mirabeau cadet fought Latour-Maubourg in December and the Breton, Kervélégan, in February; Montlosier fought Huguet, early in the year, about Malouet's character; Noailles fought Barnave in May. D'Aiguillon, while secretary in January, refused to fight Maury, who challenged him because his name came too low down on the list of speakers; but he fought and defeated a man who told the story in an insulting manner at the Club Valois. Even the pacific Gossin did not escape a challenge, and was only saved from fighting by having a fit of the gout, during which his adversary came to his senses and apologized.³ There had been enough duels to make the public infer that a system of provocation had been adopted by the Right.

¹ Draft letter, Paris, 15 Dec. 1789. *A. N. W.* 13.

² Béranger, lxxvii, note; Duquesnoy, ii. 164.

³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 5, p. 196 and no. 8, pp. 347-9; Barnave, letter just quoted above; Duquesnoy, ii. 183-4, 399-400; Montlosier, 266; Lamarck, i. 432; Gorsas, xviii, 210, note. Gossin was ill in February.

Barnave and Cazalès came into collision on the evening of Tuesday, August 10th, during one of the most uproarious sittings ever known. Cazalès had moved that a petition connected with the hotly debated subject of the disturbances in Montauban should be printed. Reubell and Barnave opposed this motion vigorously; Foucauld bellowed his insistence and a scandalous scene ensued, in which the Right, in a disorderly mass, "shouted tumultuously and threatened the President" for the space of half an hour.¹ Their object was not so much to show their indignation about Montauban as to prevent the appearance of a deputation from the Paris Comité des Recherches, which was waiting to speak about the Châtelet and its proceedings.

At some time during the tumult Barnave was near the bureau, and Cazalès, who was close to him, cried out that "all the members of the Left were brigands." Barnave took it up: "Are you speaking collectively? In that case I should take no notice of a piece of folly. Do you want to insult me personally? I should not allow that." "What I have said is meant for you," replied Cazalès and "words more offensive passed on either side." The bystanders intervened and put an end to the quarrel.² We will follow the story as Théodore Lameth gave it in his old age to M. Béranger. It is corroborated in every important point by contemporary accounts.

"At the end of the sitting Cazalès came to Barnave and said to him: 'There is really nothing in all this; we have both of us given our proofs, if you like we will go no further.' The answer was: 'I am very glad you think so; I thought

¹ *Moniteur*, v. 365; *Journal des Débats*, no. 382, p. 4.

² This is the *Chronique's* version (12 Aug., p. 895). It is followed by Desmoulins, who rewrites the scene in his lively way, *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 38, p. 670 (which probably appeared on 16 Aug.). The *Révolutions de Paris* (v. 220) gives the dialogue as generally reported: "It matters little that we should know whether M. Cazalès said during the sitting of the evening before, that the patriot deputies were 'insolent' or 'brigands;' whether M. Barnave asked him 'if he excepted him,' or 'if he was speaking collectively;' whether M. Cazalès answered, 'not one more than another,' or 'I mean it for you;' whether they used more or less offensive terms in the dispute which followed the first insults."

so too.”—Nevertheless all was far from being ended. The next day, very early in the morning, Cazalès, accompanied by the duc de Saint-Simon, came to the house of Messieurs de Lameth, where Barnave lived,¹ and woke him up, saying: “I am exactly of the same mind as I was yesterday, but my party does not want me to leave things where they are and, to my regret, I have come to tell you so.” “I foresaw it,” answered Barnave. “I thought the same thing would happen as with Labourdonnaye and Charles de Lameth.” Cazalès replied: “I am grieved about it; but, in short, when? where? and what weapon will you choose?” “In an hour; the Bois de Boulogne; pistols;” was Barnave’s answer.”

We must interrupt the narrative here to say that the marquis de Saint-Simon (he was not yet duke), the favourite second of the Right in their duels, was believed to have persuaded Cazalès that his own honour and that of his party was involved.² Cazalès was certainly only thinking of honour; but it is more than probable that those who egged him on did so in the hope that he would kill the inconvenient Barnave, who was known to be no match for him. Barnave ought to have refused to fight, but what fearless young Frenchman of his day could have resisted the temptation, when a chivalrous and greatly superior adversary woke him up suddenly and bade him come out and be shot at? He drove to the Bois de Boulogne in Alexandre’s carriage, with Alexandre for second, and Théodore rushed off to fetch the celebrated surgeon, du Fouarre, whom he placed near the scene of combat, keeping at some distance off himself. We will now resume the narrative.

““You, who received the provocation, must have the first shot,” said Cazalès. “There was no intentional offence,” answered Barnave, “I believe it on your part, I affirm it on my own; so we will draw lots.” At the same moment Alexandre de Lameth showed his closed hand to Cazalès, saying: “Odd or even?” After making some resistance, Cazalès said, “Uneven,” and seeing that he had guessed wrong, added: “You knew that I play, and you thought I should say that.”

¹ *Rue de Fleurus*, no. 14, says Béranger.

² *Bailli de Virieu* (15 Aug.), 214.

"At thirteen paces Barnave fired, but did not hit; Cazalès aimed in his turn; his weapon missed fire twice. "Good Heavens!" he cried, "what apologies I make you!"—"I am here to wait," said Barnave. At the third trial the pistol went off, but still without result. [Contemporary accounts say that the ball went close to Barnave's head.] The duel ought to have been stopped there; Alexandre de Lameth desired it greatly, but he was excessively careful of his friend's reputation, and as the other second, the duc de Saint-Simon who was older than himself, kept silence, he thought that he must do the same. The pistols were re-loaded; the balls, as was then the custom, were surrounded with ribbons to fix them more exactly; Cazalès called attention to this, saying mischievously: "Aren't we polite to you, gentlemen? Look, they are tricolour!"

"During this dismal proceeding, while the two adversaries were walking together amicably, Cazalès said to Barnave: "I should be inconsolable if I were to kill you; but you give us a great deal of trouble; what I should like would be to keep you out of the tribune for some time."—"The fear you feel," replied Barnave, "has been troubling me about you this morning; but I am more generous than you, in wishing that I may hardly touch you; for you are everything to your side, which is not very rich in orators, whilst on mine my absence would be hardly noticed."¹

"The duc de Saint-Simon here made a sign that they might come up and lots were drawn again." Barnave won once more,² he fired, and Cazalès fell, hit in the forehead. His first words were: "Well, I came here for this." Happily a hat of the shape then worn had prevented the ball from

¹ Alexandre Lameth is said to have given a slightly different version: Cazalès said "Really, M. Barnave, I should be in despair if I killed you, for I should lose the pleasure of hearing you." Barnave answered, "As for me, Sir, I should regret leaving you on the field still more. If you kill me at least I shall have successors in the tribune, but if I kill you every one will be bored to death when they have to listen to one of your side." Duckett, *Dictionnaire de la Conversation*, vol. iv, article Cazalès, by M. de Carné.

² This detail from T. Lameth, *Mémoires*. Barnave insisted on not firing first again without drawing lots.

penetrating too far, but a bone of the forehead was broken. Du Fouarre ran up, he examined the wound and cried : " This won't be anything ! " Cazalès repeated the exclamation, but fearing that he had shown too much interest in himself, he added at once : " It is the animal speaking." Then, seeing M. Théodore de Lameth, who had kept apart in the wood, he said to Alexandre : " Why doesn't your brother come closer ? " — " Because," he answered, " you have only one second, and Barnave cannot have two." Cazalès replied eagerly : " Do people of our sort need seconds, except to pick them up ? Don't they belong to one side just as much as to the other ? "

" Alexandre de Lameth's carriage, which was better than his own, was offered him ; he refused it at first, then he said quickly : " Yes, I accept it, it must be so." His kindly thought was at once understood and appreciated."¹ Barnave and the Lameths went home to change their clothes, stained with his blood, and then hastened to his lodgings, where the doctor gave them a reassuring account of the wound.²

Barnave sent a line to his mother at once : " I have just been fighting M. de Cazalès with pistols ; I am not hurt ; a ball hit him in the head, but though the wound is very serious it is not mortal. This affair is quite ended, so do not feel any uneasiness."³

His sorrow at having nearly killed Cazalès was real, and he did not conceal it. It was necessary that he should appear in public and show that he was unhurt, or there might have been riots, and his friends dragged him to the Jacobins' that evening and even forced him to preside. He had an enthusiastic reception, but " looked so much grieved, so much affected by his melancholy victory that, insensible to applause, he could hardly say a few words. A motion was made, or rather he was enjoined to ask for a law against duels, after confessing his fault publicly."⁴ He must have had one or two

¹ Béranger, lxvii-lxx.

² T. Lameth, *Mémoires*, 103. The account here is almost the same as that printed by Béranger.

³ *A. N. W.* 12. 28, undated, not in his hand.

⁴ Gorsas, xv. 169. Cf. *Chronique*, 15 Aug., p. 906 ; and *Révolutions de Paris*, v. 221.

uneasy days, for though the wound was not dangerous in itself, complications were feared; fortunately Cazalès was soon out of danger, though he did not recover for some time. Barnave visited him in his illness, and the two were friends ever after, though each kept his own opinions.¹

The duel caused great excitement; on the very day of its occurrence pamphlets about it were printed, and all through the evening newsvendors were shouting round the doors of the Manège: "Great duel between Messieurs Barnave and Cazalès."² Barnave was the idol of the people and it was pretty widely believed that if he had fallen the mob would have killed Cazalès, and perhaps others of his party. As for Barnave, he was apostrophized in every tone of remonstrance, affectionate and angry, for risking his precious life, setting a bad example, and nearly giving cause to an outburst of popular fury at what would have been considered his murder. "All good citizens," says Camille Desmoulins ". . . swore to shed their blood to avenge him and to exterminate the whole of the cul-de-sac [nick-name of the extreme Right]. For the time the Constitution would have progressed roundly. But see, O Barnave! how dear your life is to us. . . . No, the patriots far prefer that the Constitution should be retarded and that you should live, and that we should have the pleasure of keeping you amongst us. Barnave living will be able to gain over the Blacks the battles which his ghost would still have gained."³ Loustallot thought that reprisals after Barnave's death might have led to civil war; and grant, said he, that this is even possible, "what place should a man hold in the

¹ For the duel see *Chronique*, 12, 15 and 17 Aug.; Gorsas, xv. 12 and 13 Aug.; *Gazette universelle*, 12 and 13 Aug.; *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 38; *Bailli de Virieu*, 214.

² *Chronique*, 12 Aug., p. 895. The pamphlets on the duel were: (a) *Grand duel arrivé aujourd'hui 11 août au Bois de Boulogne entre MM. Cazalès et Barnave, députés de l'Assemblée nationale*. Imp. de Pain, 4 pp. (b) *Duel et funeste combat arrivé au Bois de Boulogne entre MM. Barnave et Cazalès, députés de l'Assemblée nationale* (s. d.), 8 pp. (c) *Détail du Combat qui a eu lieu au Bois de Boulogne entre M. de Cazalès et M. Barnave* (s. d.), 8 pp. There appeared later *Lettre à MM. Barnave et Cazalès . . . sur leur duel du 10 août 1790*, 22 pp. (B. M. F. 381. 415, F. R. 53. 52).

³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no 38, pp. 672-3.

opinion of the public when he has been capable of compromising thus the Revolution, the Constitution, the Country, in order that he might not be considered a coward, that he might obey a foolish prejudice ? ”¹

Cloots, in a long open letter to Barnave, written in what Mirabeau calls his “Vandalico-Oriental style,”² proposed a new remedy against duels. “Ah ! if the trees of the Bois de Boulogne could give forth oracles like the oaks of the forest of Dodona, they would repeat to the slaves of the Goths the arguments of Grouvelle the philanthropist. But, as gods are lacking, could not the cold seconds be engaged to read them out to the ferocious patients, before they measure the distances and load the weapons ? ”—“Let us arm ourselves,” he says later, “with the aegis of good sense, and every phantom will vanish, like the terrors of Andromeda at the aspect of Bellerophon.” If Barnave had been killed, Cloots would have found one consolation : “Your tomb, watered by the tears of the human race, would have become the tomb of tolerated assassination. The marble of fraternal peace would cover the sacred ashes of Barnave, and respect for the law would henceforth be the guide of public opinion.”³

The abbé Grégoire, suspicious of Barnave’s colonial policy, and glad of a chance of getting his knife in, published some “general reflections on the duel” of a violent nature. What was to be done with duellists ? he asked. “To devote them to infamy is not enough ; reason has already pronounced anathema on them, and if they were not besotted by perversity or insanity a devouring worm would eat their hearts ; but as the duel is evidently merely the mania of *imbeciles* or *villains*, we can only, as the law provides, choose for them between the asylum and the scaffold.”⁴

The aristocrats described the duel in mock heroics in the *Actes des Apôtres* and made epigrams on the triumph of crime over virtue. They took hold of the common report that Barnave was going to marry a rich widow, gave her a name and made her the reward of his victory. The widow was only

¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, v. 222–3.

² Plan, *Un Collaborateur de Mirabeau*, 81.

³ Published Gorsas, xv. 296–300.

⁴ Gorsas, xv. 179.

one of a series of wealthy brides, including a creole heiress and a non-existent sister of the Lameths, which were bestowed on him, and Madame Barnave's neighbours at Grenoble used to congratulate her on the imaginary betrothal.¹

The cruel aspect of the Revolution, which was slowly maturing in some men's hearts, becomes apparent over this duel. Many people wished that Cazalès had been killed outright, and Camille Desmoulins' jokes on the subject are rather grisly. Gorsas, who admired Cazalès, said that the death of Malouet or Maury would have been a blessing from heaven; and Marat deplored that Barnave should "pique himself on showing the sieur Cazalès the attentions of a foolish politeness." "It is republican manners that we want now, and not the weak urbanity of the corrupt ages," said Marat.²

Far different was the feeling in the Assembly. Cazalès did not return till the end of September, when the long debate on assignats was drawing to a close. Barnave was about to speak, Cazalès wished to, and they were both in the tribune together. As they greeted each other the Assembly broke into loud applause, meant for both.³

In spite of their new relations the two continued to criticize each other as before, and no speaker within the walls of the Manège ever made Barnave so angry as Cazalès did one day. Cazalès was again in fault, for he touched Barnave on his most susceptible point, his friendships.

There were divisions over the mutiny at Nancy and the measures that ought to be taken to punish those who had in any way contributed to it. The Right and the Centre applauded Bouillé who had put it down with ruthless rigour; the advanced Left considered that the soldiers had received great provocations, and that Bouillé had shed blood unnecessarily. The first wished for further severity, the second for mercy, and as the alarm caused by the mutiny subsided their opinion gained ground. It may be put very roughly that one party sided with the officers, the other with the soldiers,

¹ *Bailli de Virieu*, 215. *A. N. W.* 12. 37.

² *Ami du Peuple*, no. 201, p. 5, and note.

³ 28 Sept., Gorsas, xvi. 477; Le Hodey, xvi. 124; *Journal des Débats*, no. 451, p. 7. The *Moniteur* does not notice this incident.

and that the Right was trying to make political capital out of the death of Desilles, a young officer who had sacrificed his life in an heroic attempt to prevent the mutinous troops from firing. A report on the whole matter had been read to the Assembly by Sillery, in the name of three committees, with a bill which merely disbanded two regiments, stopped proceedings which had been instituted in the law court of Nancy by order of the Assembly, and released the soldiers and citizens who were kept prisoners in consequence of these proceedings, with other merciful provisions.¹

On the evening of Dec. 7th there was a debate on this bill. Cazalès, both as an aristocrat and an officer, was filled with indignation at such misplaced leniency, and he had come prepared for mischief. His speech, fiery and eloquent as usual, was perfectly fair until near the end. But when he came to the stoppage of legal proceedings at Nancy, proposed while the nation was still divided into two parties on the question of who had been most to blame, he let his arrow fly. "The brightest light must be turned on this work of iniquity," he said; "it is to the nation's interest to desire it, and it does desire it; and yet you are suppressing legal proceedings which have already begun! The suppression of legal proceedings is an act of tyranny. Allow me to recall to the Bretons who sit in this Assembly their just indignation when the late King had the proceedings against M. d'Aiguillon removed from the registers of the Paris Parlement. That indignation was just; all France shared it; there was not one good citizen who was not profoundly afflicted to see the virtuous La Chalotais² remain under the shadow of a calumnious accusation, while the guilty d'Aiguillon enjoyed in peace the fruit of the crimes he had committed in that province." It was a cruel shaft aimed at d'Aiguillon, whose bad father was quite indefensible, and there were many murmurs; the Breton, Cottin, calling out: "If the father did wrong, the virtues of the son should make us forget it." But Cazalès had not done with provocations; he went on to declare that he was not against mercy,

¹ *Moniteur*, vi. 569.

² A member of the Parlement of Rennes, active in resisting d'Aiguillon's nefarious doings and persecuted by him in consequence.

that once sentence had been passed, he would himself beg the King to pardon nearly all the culprits. "I say, nearly all . . . for perhaps you would find it hard to pardon the assassins of the hero of Nancy, of that young Desilles whose immortal action honours the century and the Order in which he was born."

Now Desilles was a noble, and at this, says the *Moniteur*, there was "a nearly general murmur." Barnave, who had been keeping in his anger, interrupted Cazalès by asking for leave to speak, and for some moments there was great agitation. "Although I have never interrupted M. Barnave, I ask that he may be allowed to speak," said Cazalès, and Barnave poured out his wrath.

"I say, M. le Président, that the Assembly cannot allow the orator to continue, cannot pass his speech over in silence without characterizing it; a speech in which, after having dared to disturb the ashes of the dead to solace the hatred of a party hostile to the Revolution, (a large part of the Assembly applauds) party spirit and the sharpest malignity have searched for all that nature holds dearest, in the heart of a man who has done the speaker no wrong except that of differing from him in principles, in order to lacerate it. A speech which began thus with a refinement of cruelty, and which ends with forgetting the principles of the Revolution; with something more odious still, with an insult to humanity—for it is an insult to humanity to revive distinctions, to wish to make a glory and a virtue out of the possession of privileges which, to the glory of the nation and of humanity, are happily abolished. I do not want to prolong the discussion. The speaker has failed in his duty to his colleague, for never can differences of opinion justify such barbarous methods. He has failed, whatever his private opinion may be, in his duty to the immutable principles of the Constitution." And he asked that Cazalès should be called to order and have his name inscribed in the *procès-verbal*, for disrespect to his colleague and to the Assembly.

D'Aiguillon began to speak and when he was applauded said, rather neatly, that this applause sufficiently avenged both himself and his father's memory. He therefore requested

that Cazalès might not be called to order. Cazalès protested that he had not meant to hurt d'Aiguillon's feelings ; that as soon as he had noticed his presence he was sorry that he had spoken ; M. Barnave had envenomed what he had said, and he asked the Assembly to decide in which of their two speeches party-spirit, the "tone of a faction" was shown. He went on to speak, and well too, of the necessity of an opposition and of the right of free speech.

Barnave, who was still boiling, again interrupted him angrily : " I am as much the partisan of a great freedom in the expression of thought as the speaker ; but in no country would it be allowable to ignore the rights of humanity ; but in France it will never be allowable to attack constitutional laws ; and it is a constitutional law that there are no more Orders. . . . As to the other part of my motion, let your hearts, let your delicacy judge. You feel well enough that the odious motive displayed in the speech which has been made to you was overflowing and entirely personal."

Cazalès replied that when Desilles was born, he was born a member of an Order ; Alexandre Lameth took up the point of the duty of an opposition ; Clermont-Tonnerre said that the public conduct of any man was a fit subject for criticism, and that the memory of Henri IV himself had been outraged in that tribune with impunity—a hit at Charles Lameth—and Cazalès was finally only called to order for having shown disrespect to the constitutional laws of the realm.¹ The debate then went on in peace, and the committees' articles were passed, with amendments.

It was curious, as the *Ami des Patriotes*, a paper inspired by Mirabeau, observed, to see Barnave protecting the memory of Louis XV's bad minister, and the Left being supposed to avenge an insult put upon it ;² but a scrupulous respect for all the pieties of life was part of the creed of that generous Assembly. One friend speaking for another was sure of a hearing and of sympathy. Mirabeau won universal approval when he did his best for his brother's cause, and Victor de Broglie, by pleading even with tears for the father who had almost cast him off, actually persuaded the Assembly to modify a decree

¹ *Moniteur*, vi. 581-3.

² *Ami des Patriotes*, i. 75.

in favour of the marshal, who had been minister of war when the Bastille was taken.¹

Cazalès had been studiously moderate in his answers to Barnave and he must have made amends for this wayward attack, for he continued to be on friendly terms with Barnave and his party. A story is told that in January, when he returned to the Manège after a fortnight's absence on account of illness, many deputies, amongst whom were Barnave, Alexandre Lameth, d'Aiguillon and Lafayette, pressed round him after the sitting to ask him what he thought about some questions concerning the organization of trial by jury, which had just been debated. Cazalès in reply declaimed against juries in terms which became sadly applicable to the exceptional jury of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and prophesied that juries would end by hanging, first Lafayette and the "1789" Club, then aristocrats like himself, and then "Jacobins like you, M. Barnave." It is all, said he, "a simple question of priority."²

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no 70, p. 202; *Moniteur*, vii. 544. See Lacretelle, *Dix Années*, 47-8.

² Edmond Biré; *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous la Terreur*, iv. 37-40 (Paris, 1884, &c.). M. Biré quotes the story in full from the *Ami du Roi* of 24 Jan. 1791, and refers to a letter from Cazalès to the abbé Royou in the 28 Jan. number of the same paper.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HEIGHT OF POPULARITY

DURING the Revolution startling events and changes succeeded each other so rapidly that one effaced the other in men's memories, often in a capricious fashion. It has thus happened that the extent of Barnave's popularity has been forgotten, and it is only after reading the cumulative evidence of contemporary documents that one can realize how accurate he was when he told his judges that he had been "the spoilt child of the Revolution and of renown."¹

He writes in one of his notes: "Necker was the first who, in our time, enjoyed what is called popularity in France. It went to Lafayette when the National Guard was created; soon afterwards Mirabeau shared it with him; but Mirabeau's popularity, like that of M. d'Orléans, was always accompanied by a good deal of suspicion. Charles Lameth and I had it next, but a little diminished because Lafayette still kept a great number of partisans. We lost it over the colonial business." Brissot, "who took it from us was not able to capture it . . . and it went to Robespierre, but so much decreased that he may be said to have had no more than perhaps a fourth of our partisans."²

From May till well on into December their popularity was at its height, and the two staunch champions of the people were beloved through France. Barnave's position in the Assembly had become, as M. Aulard says, "almost official."³ His colleagues showed their confidence by electing him on three committees, two of them of first-rate importance. He was already reporter of the Colonial Committee; in July he headed the list of a committee of six, chosen to look into the vexed question of Avignon; at the end of the month he was

¹ *Œuvres*, ii. 374.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 110.

³ *Orateurs de l'Assemblée Constituante*, 494. He has often been called "the Advocate-General of the Constituent Assembly."

put on the Diplomatic Committee ; in September he was again first on the list of the Revision Committee of seven, which was added to the Constitutional Committee for the ultimate revision of the Constitution.¹

Outside the Assembly he was regarded with a kind of national pride ; the newspapers gushed over his youth and his eloquence ; he was pointed out to strangers in the street. In his own country his fellow-citizens gave him the highest honour in their power to bestow by electing him mayor of Grenoble (Aug. 1st), and when he refused, because the office was incompatible with his duties in Paris, they insisted on his accepting. It was a distinction of so much account that the patriots were afraid he might leave the Assembly to become first citizen at home, and Camille Desmoulins even suggested that it was a trick of the aristocrats to lure him away ; but he had only accepted conditionally, and when he saw that there was no chance of the Assembly's coming speedily to an end he resigned.²

Foes as well as friends acknowledged the superiority of his talents. Dampmartin, Alexandre Lameth's old friend and comrade who was in Paris in the summer, says that all circles had their favourite orators, yet whatever the political opinions or personal predilections of any circle might be, "an unanimous agreement set Mirabeau, Cazalès, Maury, and Barnave in a brilliant ring apart." "The palm was often given to Barnave, and an impartial judge will recognize that he did not owe this solely to caprice and passion. On the contrary, his rights were in many respects incontestable. His oratorical powers did not show a great lustre, but they triumphed by the help of a sound logic, a clear mind, and a precise method. Perhaps no one has ever carried farther the rare talent of summing up a speech well. He used to ask for leave to speak after several adversaries had been disputing over difficult questions and had sometimes made them as

¹ Avignon Committee, decreed 17 July, elected 23 July ; Mirabeau and Charles Lameth were members, so were Pétion and Cazalès, added later. Revision Committee, decreed 23 Sept., elected 26 Sept.

² On 6 Nov., see *Barnave, maire de Grenoble*, par H. de Beylié. *Bulletin de l'Académie Delphinale*, 4^e série, vol. 12, p. 563, &c. *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 38, p. 646 ; Gorsas, xv. 169, note.

unintelligible to others as they were to themselves. In a few sentences he dispersed the clouds, resolved doubts and substituted brilliant light for profound darkness."

Let it not be supposed that this is the testimony of an admirer. Dampmartin was an aristocrat, honest and truthful, but so much prejudiced by calumny that though he could overlook the Lameths' politics he writes of their friend: "Horror filled worthy souls at the very name of Barnave," (here follows the usual allusion to the "fatal words"). "An active figure, a pleasant face, an agreeable voice, spoke at first in his favour; but when these attractive qualities were set against his cold barbarity, there resulted the most revolting contrast which froze the senses and produced a painful shudder." ¹

The German Halem, who first heard Barnave in October, gave his correspondents a sketch of him as he appeared in the tribune. "This celebrated deputy of Dauphiné is a young man of twenty-six, of middle height and slight build. He has a refined, pale face, which announces thoughtfulness but also ambition. . . . He combines decision and energy in delivery with ease and grace. He is strong without showing passion, and what he says makes all the deeper impression because one believes that one is hearing the result of cool reason." In another letter Halem speaks of "the mixture of dignity and modesty which is peculiar to him." ²

Lacretelle's recollections shows us another aspect. "He had all the graces of youth without having its fire, or rather without having its flame, for within he was burning. . . . Calm without coldness, positive without sharpness, when this imposing young man appeared in the middle of a debate, he silenced clamour by the force of a concentrated scorn." ³

His enemies have recorded his favourite attitude when speaking, "his hat under the left arm, one hand on his hip, gesticulating with the other in a weighty and measured manner." His speech was measured too; he rolled out syllables emphatically and recapitulated arguments with "an

¹ Dampmartin, *Événements*, i. 159, 165-6, and errata at end of vol. i.

² Halem, pt. ii. 67-8, 212. The omitted passage is about the strength of Barnave's principles.

³ *Dix Années*, 38.

imposing slowness". Mirabeau's pace, it may be noted, was always slow too, even in his most vehement moments.¹

Prosperity such as Barnave enjoyed in the period of his greatest popularity falls to the lot of few; but young as he was he was never unduly elated, and in all the events of these days which remain to be noticed, as well as in many others which we are compelled to pass over, we find him exactly the same man as he had been in earlier days, with a little added authority in his tone.

We will begin with a curious affair of the month of August in which he was prominent.

A retired officer, Bonne-Savardin by name, chief agent in the "Maillebois conspiracy"—a futile but apparently genuine plot for upsetting the Revolution by foreign interference—had been arrested by order of the Comité des Recherches, imprisoned in the Abbaye, and sent before the Châtelet on a charge of high treason. Before his examination he was spirited away, and the next thing heard of him was that he had been rearrested at Châlons-sur-Marne in the carriage of one of the deputies of Paris, the abbé Perrotin de Barmond, who was conveying him and another man to the frontier and using a passport which described them as his servants. An order of the Assembly, given on Barnave's motion, brought the three back to Paris.²

De Barmond, a member of the Right who had been a clerical councillor in the Paris Parlement, was heard in his own defence at the bar, on Aug. 18th. Speaking with great calm and dignity, he declared that he had no previous acquaintance with Bonne; that the man had appealed to him for protection simply because he had a reputation for befriending the unfortunate; that out of mere compassion he had sheltered the fugitive in his house and taken him safely out of Paris. The speech made so much impression that no one cared to answer it, and the tribune remained empty for a while. Then Maury,

¹ *L'Ami des Ministériels*, no. ii. (quoted in the *Patriote français*, 19 Sept. 1791, p. 343) attributed to the deputy Anthoine. It is the attitude of the caricature of Barnave. Duquesnoy, ii. 265; *Les Sabbats Jacobites*, no. xv. 230; Dumont, 281.

² See *Moniteur*, v. 310, 402 (the plot), and 263-4 (29 July).

in a carefully unaggressive speech, asked that the abbé might be set at liberty if no one appeared to bring an accusation against him; Duport too, an old friend and colleague of de Barmond's, pleaded for him with much warmth for the best part of an hour. Barnave took a different line, he pointed out that it was necessary to detain de Barmond while inquiries were being made; but he spoke with great moderation, and his motion, that the abbé should remain under arrest in his own house until the Comité des Recherches had reported, was voted.¹

The report was made on Aug. 23rd and de Barmond did not come out well in it. It appeared that he had by no means made a clean breast of the business to the Assembly as he had promised, and that his story was inaccurate. There were even suspicions of his having been an accomplice of Bonne's escape from prison. Yet the Right, who had espoused his cause from the first, made another attempt to get him set at liberty provisionally. Maury and Malouet were ingenious in palliating his conduct. Bonne, they said, had been originally arrested by order of the Comité des Recherches, an extra-legal body with odious functions, therefore his arrest was illegal; and as, besides this, he had not yet been committed for trial and there was no proof of his guilt, it could not be considered a crime to help him to escape. Several speakers refuted these arguments, but in a manner so confused that their labour was lost and the Assembly was near setting de Barmond at liberty, when Barnave intervened. He cleared up the question at once, showing among other arguments that the Comité des Recherches had been authorized to investigate cases of high treason by the Assembly itself; that its actions would only become illegal when the establishment of the new tribunals had rendered it unnecessary; and that the Assembly ought not to establish privileges in favour of its own members, when they were convicted on their own confession of disobeying the law, as de Barmond was. He was supported by Mirabeau, and his motion to declare that there were grounds for the charge against de Barmond, which meant that the abbé would

¹ *Moniteur*, v. 425-8, 431; *Journal de Paris*, 20 Aug. 947, 21 Aug. 949; *Mercur de France*, 28 Aug. 317.

continue under arrest and that legal proceedings would take their course, was adopted. Duport and Fréteau tried to the last to slip in an amendment in favour of their old colleague.¹

These debates were not without incidents. On the day that de Barmond was heard at the bar, one of his friends, Frondeville, late President of the Rouen Parlement, when enlarging on the abbé's good deed in delivering a citizen from tyranny, began a sentence thus: "When for ten months the assassins of our Princes have been walking about this capital in freedom; when they are perhaps seated among us"—an allusion to the 6th October which produced an instant commotion. Frondeville was censured;² he retorted by printing his speech, with the motto "*Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas*," and a preface in which he said that the only merit of his discourse lay in its having been "honoured by the censure of the National Assembly;" and not content with this, he had the pamphlet distributed in the Manège.

Goupil called attention to the scandal (Aug. 21st), and proposed that Frondeville should be sent to prison for eight days. A noisy discussion followed and the Right were trying, by a series of evasions and quibbles, to get the punishment reduced, when the dreaded Barnave appeared in the tribune and began to shed the usual unwelcome light. "When the penalty of censure is considered an honour, imprisonment is the mildest penalty"—he was saying, when Faucigny, beside himself with rage, rushed into the middle of the Hall: "This means civil war!" he cried, "and there is nothing for it but to fall upon these fellows, sword in hand!" A shudder went round the benches and the Left rose to their feet as one man. "I can always see Barnave standing calmly in the tribune in the midst of the universal horror," wrote Lacretelle, forty years later.³ When the tumult was over he quietly repeated and finished his sentence—his way when interrupted—and added: "As to what has just happened, Mr. President, it must have made us all sad, and I will not enter into it; but the respect which the Assembly owes to itself demands that you

¹ *Moniteur*, v. 462-6, 470-3; *Journal des Débats*, no. 399, p. 13, &c.; *Point du Jour*, xiii. 281.

² *Ibid.*, v. 430-1.

³ *Dix Années*, 47.

should give orders for the arrest of the person in question." But here Frondeville ran to the tribune: "I am guilty; I am very guilty!" he cried again and again, imploring in a touching manner, that as he alone was to blame he alone might be punished. The Assembly, much moved, reduced his own sentence to eight days' arrest in his house, at the proposal of Goupil. As for Faucigny, he apologized handsomely and withdrew expressions uttered in a moment of passion. Charles Lameth, who spoke quite kindly of him, would have had him arrested to keep up the dignity of the Assembly, and even to secure him against the anger of the people; but a decree was unanimously passed, 'that the serious punishment incurred by M. de Faucigny was remitted, in consideration of his apologies and repentance.'¹

Frondeville and Faucigny were not the only members of the Right who would have fallen into serious trouble over this affair in any other Assembly. The inquiries of the Comité des Recherches elicited the fact that Bonne, after his escape, had been sheltered for several days by the redoubtable Foucauld, and the Committee proposed that Foucauld should be examined. Foucauld hastened to acknowledge the truth of the charge, and to assure the Assembly that he was proud of what he had done. He knew nothing of Bonne, he said, he had only been fulfilling a duty of friendship by helping de Barmond who was in difficulties through a good action, and a religious duty by giving shelter to a man in distress. He should do it again; these were his principles, and he had no other defence. It was a defence which satisfied the Assembly, and Robespierre was the only speaker who suggested that Foucauld had been to blame. Robespierre proposed his arrest, and in proposing it used words of a terrible significance: "Friendship does not consist in sharing the faults of a friend; the feeling of humanity is not relative to a single man." But Robespierre's conclusions were mild and neither he nor his colleagues had any inkling as yet whither this principle would lead him. Le Hodey remarks that he was "less exaggerated than usual," less with "his head in the moon and his feet on the earth." Robespierre was not supported, no order

¹ *Moniteur*, v. 447-51; *Procès-verbal*, no. 387, p. 11, vol. 28.

even for Foucauld's examination was made, and a sneer from Mirabeau was his only punishment.¹ And this deputy who had sheltered an escaped prisoner accused of treason against the nation, continued to make noisy war upon the Left exactly as before ; a fact which, if it speaks much for his courage speaks even more for their magnanimity.

In these debates Barnave persuaded his colleagues to be firm as well as merciful ; in the debates on the Nancy mutiny he persuaded them to be merciful as well as firm. It will be enough to say a few words about this mutiny, of which we have already spoken, without entering into the long and intricate story.

The Army was suffering from the transitional state of affairs, discipline was relaxed to an alarming extent, and in many regiments there was open enmity between tactless officers and insubordinate men. The Assembly was endeavouring to remedy evils by reform and to stop outbreaks of disorder, but measures lately passed had not been successful, and in August two regiments mutinied at Nancy. The situation was one of extreme danger ; the mutiny was likely to spread, it was feared that the civil population would side with the soldiers, and Bouillé, who was in command of the troops sent to restore order, informed the Assembly that he believed the municipality of Nancy, whose concurrence was legally necessary, would not call upon him to act. Under these circumstances the Military Committee, by the mouth of Emmery, proposed to give Bouillé *carte blanche*.

There were, however, a good many deputies who were anxious to avoid bloodshed and believed that less extreme measures would be efficacious ; and their hands were strengthened when the Assembly consented to hear representatives sent by the National Guard of Nancy, who testified to the extreme provocation which the offending soldiers had received. This put a different complexion on the affair, and the Assembly hesitated. Lafayette and other men of weight still thought that it would be advisable to leave everything to Bouillé, and a speech of Robespierre helped them. His proposal to

¹ 23 Aug., *Moniteur*, v. 462-4 ; Le Hodey, xv. 34 ; *Procès-verbal*, no. 389, vol. 28.

send four deputies to Nancy to make inquiries was not unacceptable, but his denunciations of Bouillé and other officers made it impossible for a shaken adversary to capitulate. At length Barnave proposed that two commissaries should be sent to Nancy with a Proclamation,¹ and that the Proclamation should explain to the soldiers: first, that the Assembly meant to see justice done them, to punish the guilty of all ranks and to examine into everything; secondly, that before anything could be done they must return to order; and thirdly, that until the Assembly had given a verdict no one should be punished. Barnave and Robespierre had the same object in view, but their two characteristic speeches might serve as models of how to say a thing and how not to say it. Robespierre made mercy seem a party triumph; Barnave made it seem the desire of each man's heart. The Assembly was won over, Emmery adopted the measure, and it passed almost unanimously.²

Barnave had been ordered to help the Military Committee in drawing up a Proclamation, and at the evening sitting he read one which he had himself composed. More anxious to convince than to threaten and pressed for time, he had not done the difficult piece of work to the satisfaction of the Assembly; his Proclamation was thought too diffuse, and above all too mild. The friends of severity saw their chance, and Røederer read a much sterner, shorter one of his own writing. Barnave protested that it was contrary to the spirit of the morning's decree, and Emmery came to the rescue with a suggestion that the Proclamation should stand over till next day, in order that Barnave might improve it.³ "We have prevailed in getting the Proclamation made a little less weak than yesterday," wrote Lafayette to the King, and when Barnave read the amended version it met with universal approval. It was well fitted for its purpose but it came too late, and the wise and humane intentions of the Assembly were

¹ The measure had been concerted in the Jacobins, *Courrier français*, 1 Sept., p. 7.

² 31 Aug., *Moniteur*, v. 527-31.

³ *Journal des Débats*, no. 412, pp. 7-8; The *Patriote français*, 2 Sept., gives part of this proclamation.

frustrated. News came the same evening that Bouillé had already entered Nancy and quenched the mutiny in blood.¹

The public heard of the slaughter with dismay, but in the Assembly relief and gratitude for peril escaped and order restored overpowered other feelings, and it was a prominent Jacobin, Alexandre Beauharnois, who proposed a vote which expressed approval of the conduct of Bouillé as well as of the behaviour of his troops. A small minority resisted and there was much noise and excitement; Alexandre Lameth proposed another formula in which nothing was said of approval, and Robespierre tried to speak, but the vote of approval was carried, in a skilful wording by Mirabeau; "unanimously," says the *Moniteur*, and Michelet has made a point of this. It is a point that requires notice, for the *Moniteur* is in direct contradiction to a statement made by Barnave at his trial. He was then accused of having 'voted thanks to Bouillé,' and answered, that far from having done so he had made every effort in the Jacobins to prevent the passing of the decree; that in the Assembly he had vainly tried to get leave to speak, and that Lameth, "more fortunate," had opposed the decree. The newspapers throw no light on the matter and Lameth's speech is obviously curtailed in the *Moniteur*. But this is one of many instances in which Barnave's truthfulness can be unexpectedly demonstrated, for Lafayette when congratulating Bouillé writes: "I send you the decree, passed to-day almost unanimously; there were not thirty members who rose to vote against it."² Thirty was the number of the extreme Left according to their enemies, and an opposition of thirty always means Barnave's party.

¹ Lafayette, iii. 141 (letter in the *Armoire de fer*. The date, 31 Aug., added by the King, is a mistake for 1 Sept.) The Proclamation, *Moniteur*, v. 539, needs correcting by the *Procès-verbal*, no. 398, p. 8, &c., vol. 28. The news of Bouillé's entry was announced to the Jacobins; *Patriote français*, 2 Sept., p. 3.

² *Moniteur*, v. 558, &c.; Michelet, livre iv., chap. v.; Barnave, *Œuvres*, ii. 383, 397; Lafayette, iii. 144. The dislike of the Jacobin leaders to the vote of thanks was notorious at the time. See the way in which Desmoulins speaks of Barnave and his friends in his eulogy of Loustallot, whose end was hastened by this vote, *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 45, p. 264.

Our next incident arose out of the naval mutiny at Brest. The Assembly, as we know, had long been dissatisfied with the ministers, whose ill-will or incapacity had become notorious, and Paris felt even more strongly than the Assembly. Twice in the summer a mob came to the terrasse des Feuillants to shout for their dismissal, and after the second of these demonstrations Necker resigned and left France.¹ His colleagues still clung to office. The Assembly took no notice of the clamours of the mob; but in October the four committees (military, naval, diplomatic, and colonial) which were ordered to report on the mutiny at Brest, came to the conclusion that the inefficiency of the ministers was responsible for the disorder, and that a decisive step must be taken to rid the country of them. They therefore put an article in their bill directing the President to represent to the King, that the people's distrust of the actual ministry was the greatest obstacle to the re-establishment of order and the completion of the Constitution.²

Menou was the reporter, and Cazalès opened the debate with one of his finest speeches. No respect for ministers moved him when he opposed the article, and his indictment of all of them and especially of Necker, "your fugitive finance-minister," was scathing. But the step proposed was, he argued, unconstitutional; to express the wish of the people is to intimate an order to the King, and the proper way to proceed is by impeachment. Malouet and Clermont-Tonnerre spoke ably and eloquently on the same side. Virieu was not so good; he suggested that those who were for turning the ministers out wanted their places—a charge which Barnave afterwards parried by proposing a declaration that the Assembly adhered to the decree which made this impossible. A great hit was made on the popular side by a young advocate of promise, Brevet de Beaujour, whose declamatory speech,

¹ Demonstrations of 17 July and 2 Sept. ; Necker resigned on 4 Sept. Among Barnave's papers (*A. N. W.* 13) are notes for an attack on Necker, perhaps intended for use in the Jacobins. He enumerates all the occasions on which the Assembly had done as Necker desired, and ends : "What does he want, then ? What is he asking for ? What causes our distress except his incapacity ?"

² 19 Oct., *Moniteur*, vi. 160.

spirited but devoid of argument, obtained the honour of being printed by order.¹

Halem was in an unreserved gallery that day (Oct. 20th), and relates that as each orator mounted the tribune, a whisper ran round: "Who is it? Is he sound?—'Here's a sound one, by Jove!' was the quick comment, when Barnave, the darling of the people, appeared."²

Barnave's speech was both an answer to Cazalès on the constitutional question and an indictment of the ministers, based on the general dissatisfaction which they had caused. In the course of it his statements were flatly contradicted by some members of the Military Committee, and an uproar ensued. He "let the murmurs pass over," and continued his speech "without losing his self-possession," and when, at the end, he challenged those who were satisfied with the ministry to rise, only one member did so.³ The Left, confident of victory, now shouted for the debate to be closed, and closed it was after a speech on the other side. But victory was not to fall to the Left that day. After a long fight over a motion to put "the previous question," during which an amendment to except Montmorin from the censure on the ministers was passed, the Right succeeded in forcing the *appel nominal*, with disastrous results. At that moment the ministers happened to have a great many minor places to dispose of; the fear of disobliging them caused a number of members, including even the inflexible Camus, to walk out without voting, and the four committees were defeated by thirty-seven votes.⁴

There was dismay in the patriot ranks, and Desmoulins in a transient fit of pique made a half attack on Barnave, noticeable as the first sign of the rift that was bound to come between Barnave and the more advanced revolutionaries. The passage has often been quoted. Barnave's speech had been vigorous, but he had argued instead of denouncing, and Camille, whose

¹ *Moniteur*, vi. 160-2, 166-9.

² Halem, pt., ii. 67, 69.

³ *Moniteur*, vi. 169-70; Halem, loc. cit. The member was de Vaudreuil.

⁴ *Moniteur*, 170-1; Le Hodey, xvii. 43-4; Gorsas, xvii. 325. Incorrect lists of non-voters were published, and the papers were full of disclaimers.

taste was not always impeccable, preferred Brevet's declamations.¹ "I do not want to make it a crime in an orator that he was mediocre on such and such a day," he wrote; "nevertheless, in the National Assembly and on a day of battle, when a patriot puts himself in the tail of the fight to finish breaking up the Blacks and to decide the victory, I could wish him to be very sure of his tactics." And after a general complaint of certain patriots who affect to dominate the tribune, he continued: "In the debate on the dismissal of the ministers, when one heard Messrs. Barnave and Cazalès one would have thought that it was the second who had cracked the other's crown. In general the speeches of the patriots at that sitting were too like hair in 1789, flat and unpowdered. Where wert thou, Mirabeau, with thine elegant and well-nourished crop? For some time, in the great debates of the National Assembly M. Barnave's harangue has always been kept for the last, and after that the discussion is closed. I hope that the illustrious mayor of Grenoble will forgive me for saying that this time, at least, it was not a case for 'pulling away the ladder,' as the saying goes. Why did the two Lameths, whom we all love, cry *aux voix, aux voix*, when the energetic Reubell, the eloquent Pétion, were asking leave to speak; when Hercules Mirabeau, coming up with his club, was going to crush all the pygmies of the cul-de-sac?"²

Hercules Mirabeau, if Camille had but known it, might have spoken had he chosen, and refrained out of regard for the Court though he wished for the dismissal of the ministers. He was at the Jacobins' that night, for he had lately rejoined them; partly because he found that the presidency of the Assembly was out of his reach without their support; partly because the leaders had been generous over the Châtelet business;—Alexandre Lameth had defended him in the Club when things looked blackest for him.

The meeting was thronged with disconsolate patriots much in need of cheering. Mirabeau was one of the first speakers, d'Aiguillon, whose turn it was, making way for him with

¹ Brevet, an estimable young man, by no means exaggerated, was guillotined in 1794.

² *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 48, pp. 417-19.

a compliment. Mirabeau criticized the ministers; he also defended himself against allegations that he had lately been holding secret conferences with the Queen at St. Cloud, saying proudly: "My reputation is part of the domain of French freedom." After him spoke d'Aiguillon, Noailles, Barnave, both the Lameths, Reubell and Robespierre; and all present were stirred to new enthusiasm. But nothing was decided on, except that an article in the four committees' bill, censuring the Brest municipality for infringing the law in the excess of their zeal, should be softened. It is an instance of the power of the Jacobins that this was actually done.¹

Mirabeau set the seal on his new access of patriotism by making his magnificent speech on the tricolour in the Assembly, regardless of what the Court might think. Fresh measures against the ministers were not found necessary; before long all but Montmorin resigned, the two last being finally shaken down by a petition from Paris. They were replaced by others, favourable to the Revolution, whom Lafayette of course always spoke of as his own choice. For the first time in French history, so it was proudly said, the place of Keeper of the Seals was taken by a simple citizen, Duport-Dutertre, formerly an advocate and now one of Bailly's most popular and efficient lieutenants in the municipality. He was, as we shall see, on friendly terms with Barnave.

One of the first results of the defeat of the "patriots" was, that they resolved to reassure the country and show that they had not lost ground, by securing Barnave's election to the presidency of the Assembly.² Hitherto, though he had every claim to the office including the two indispensable ones of personal dignity and physical strength, he had been kept out of it, less on account of his "great youth," as Le Hodey puts it, than because he was too valuable to his party to be spared.³ At the end of May he had received votes, but was defeated in the second round; now, in October, he only missed election by two votes in the first round on Saturday the 23rd, and on

¹ Halem, pt. ii. 74-6; Gorsas, xvii. 342; *Moniteur*, vi. 177; Lamarck, ii. 265.

² *Bailli de Virieu*, 222.

³ Le Hodey, xvii. 115.

Sunday he had the requisite majority. He took possession of the chair on Monday the 25th, amid great applause.¹

It was the custom for retiring and incoming Presidents to make little speeches of thanks and protestations of zeal, and often to welcome their successor with a compliment. As time went on it became impossible to say anything new ; but there is a ring of sincerity and an absence of exaggeration in Barnave's two speeches which gives them freshness and interest. His predecessor and successor, Merlin and Chasset, took this opportunity to speak of him in terms which have no parallel in these presidential addresses. "The purest patriotism, the soundest judgement, the gentlest philosophy, the most luminous eloquence,—this is what your votes have just crowned in the person of the colleague whom I am proud to call my successor," said Merlin. "I resign to him a place which he would have filled long since, if you had not judged his presence more necessary in the tribune ; and, perfectly sure that I am only your organ, I congratulate the nation on having at the head of its representatives one of those men who have served it best, and the one who from his fortunate age gives promise of serving it for the longest number of years." Chasset, when he succeeded on November 8th, said that Barnave had proved that "with the grace of youth and the wisdom of ripe age, he was as superior in this office as in the tribune. It would be rash to venture to succeed him, if in a picture there were not always a merit in shadows." ²

Chasset's praise is said to have expressed the opinion of the Assembly, for Barnave had made a very good President.³ His fortnight was uneventful, much business was got through and there were only two scenes. In one of these he had to call the abbé Maury to order, a duty which fell to the lot of every President. The other was really serious. A deputation from Corsica, whose allegations were supported by Mirabeau, offended the Right deeply, and a terrible storm raged. Barnave behaved with uncommon dignity ; he put on his hat—the

¹ Le Hodey, xii. 12 and 41 ; xvii. 95, 110. His competitors were Beaumez and Emmery in May, de Bonnay and de Jessé in October.

² *Moniteur*, vi. 207, 323.

³ *Journal de Paris*, 9 Nov., p. 1272.

last resort of a President—and threatened rigorous penalties, and his firmness quelled the disturbance.¹ One of the duties of the President was to present decrees to the King for sanction or acceptance, and Barnave was obliged to go once to St. Cloud, where the Court was still prolonging its summer residence ; a long drive for a busy man. Charles Lameth, anxious that his friend should make an appearance befitting the dignity of his position, lent him carriages and outriders, to the scandal of the aristocrats.²

This presidency gave great satisfaction to patriots all over the country. In Lyons, for instance, a municipal officer dressed a poor citizen in new clothes from head to foot to celebrate it, asking the man in return to pray Heaven to preserve the illustrious Barnave ; an incident which delighted the Jacobins. Marat growled suspicion, but Marat had been displeased with Barnave for using arguments about the ministers when the case was self-evident. He thought stones would be more efficacious and wished that ' the people ' had spirit enough to take them to the gallery in their pockets and throw them at Cazalès.³

Shortly after Barnave's presidency he came very near proposing a law against duelling, as the Jacobins had enjoined on him ; a duel forced upon Charles Lameth was the cause.

During the elections to the States-General Charles Lameth, in an official capacity, had prevented a young man named Blot de Chauvigny, who was under age, from voting in an Assembly of the Nobles. Chauvigny did not resent it at the time, but early in November 1790 he suddenly challenged Lameth on this frivolous pretext. For three days Lameth, fortified by his friends, resisted repeated temptations with what Barnave described as " patriotic patience," after having

¹ 5 Nov., and 6 Nov., *Moniteur*, vi. 299, 311–12. A Corsican clerical deputy is said to have approached the tribune with a stiletto, to stab Mirabeau. The journalist Robert, who did not like Barnave, writes of him (*Mercure National*, 9 Nov., p. 1450) : " He was beautiful and majestic at that moment ; one would have said that he was inspired by the very genius of liberty."

² *Bailli de Virieu*, 222.

³ Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 423 (from *Journal des Clubs*) ; *Ami du Peuple*, 29 Oct., pp. 1–2 and note, and 22 Oct., p. 2, note.

apparently sent Menou and Barnave to tell Chauvigny that he would not fight till the session was over.¹ But Chauvigny had been set on by others and the aristocrats were determined to have a duel. Barnave and Menou were insulted in the Tuileries, and a knot of military deputies tried to screw Lameth up to fighting pitch by making sarcastic remarks, which Charles, who was never behindhand when sarcasms were flying, returned with interest. On the afternoon of the third day (November 12th) the duc de Castries, Chauvigny's colonel and an old companion in arms of Lameth's in America, sought him out after the Assembly had risen, to demand an explanation of a sarcasm which had touched himself. He was so provocative that Lameth's patience gave way; his prudent friends were not by to restrain him, and he went off then and there to the Bois de Boulogne with de Castries. Beauharnois and an outside friend acted as his seconds; needless to say the marquis de Saint-Simon was one of de Castries's. The antagonists fought with swords, Lameth fell, badly wounded in the arm, and his life was supposed to be in danger.

The fury of the patriots may be imagined. An angry mob took the law into its own hands next morning and sacked de Castries's hôtel, smashing the furniture and throwing it out of window, but taking nothing.² This made the aristocrats as angry as the patriots, and when, in the evening, a deputation from a battalion of National Guards brought the Assembly an address against duelling in general and de Castries in particular, the Right made a scene. An unknown and generally mild M. Roy shouted "scoundrel!" an insult which though meant for all the Left was so timed that it sounded as though directed against Charles Lameth. There were instant demands for his punishment, and when the deputation had finished Barnave spoke, promising to look at the question with a coolness, which, said he, "I could not preserve if I were to follow the impulses of my heart to-day." He gave it as his opinion that "If there is any real means of preventing personal vengeance," it is that the law should punish insults; people would then soon cease making them. "I do not know how it is

¹ Gorsas, xviii. 200.

² *Chronique*, 14 Nov., p. 1269-71, 24 Nov., 1309-10, Gorsas, xviii. 229.

done," he continued, " but there is a systematic provocation of good citizens . . . he who has now been laid low is not the only one who has experienced these attacks ; several of us have been insulted too, in the Tuileries, in public places. . . . It is not the time to exclaim against the fury of the people, when that fury has been so long provoked. We shall prevent the people from giving way to the impetuous feelings which we now deplore, by setting them a good example. Let the Assembly set this example ; let this Hall cease to present a daily spectacle of offence ; let it show nothing but union, brotherhood, and confidence ; let us no longer be obliged to wage a ceaseless strife with those whose efforts must, sooner or later, become disastrous to themselves." But he was firm on the point that order must be kept, and that Roy, who had insulted " a man whom we love and esteem," must be arrested and taken to prison ; and when he was informed that the insult had not been intended for Charles Lameth, he replied that this made no difference to the principle.¹

The indulgence of the Assembly was exhausted, and Roy had to go to the Abbaye for three days. He might have been let off but for the taunting speeches of Virieu, and of Foucauld who spoke rudely of Barnave. Mirabeau, who had intended to blame the violence of the mob, was so much exasperated by the scene that he made a speech in which he exculpated the people, and turning upon the Right rent them in pieces till Foucauld almost cried out for mercy.

On the following evening (November 14th) Barnave spoke on duelling in the Jacobins', and Halem, who was present, gives a short *résumé* of what he said :

" In the time of the Feudal system and of despotism the duel, perhaps, had often been the only way of setting a point of honour right. Now that law rules, the duel is manifestly an outrage on law. He thought he could assert that public opinion had long been convinced on this point, and it seemed to him incontrovertibly necessary in the present circumstances, when the duel was endangering the life of one of the greatest champions of public freedom, to make use of the moment,

¹ *Moniteur*, vi. 373-4 ; *Journal des Débats*, no. 504, pp. 2-3. Cf. Le Hodey, xvii. 419, and Malouet, ii. 98.

and to overthrow the remains of a false feeling of honour by another feeling ; yes, by passion ! Therefore he announced his intention of making a motion on the subject in the National Assembly without delay, and asked his brothers in arms to support him. He said all this, and a great deal more, with such ease and yet so movingly that it called forth once more the loud applause of the whole room.”¹

The first applause had been given when he announced a decree just passed by the Assembly which was of importance to the Jacobins. An existing law already allowed citizens to meet together, peacefully and unarmed ; but they had to inform the municipality of their intention and to obtain permission. On the pretext that this law gave them the power, the municipality of Dax had arbitrarily dissolved the Jacobins of that place and seized their papers. The Comité des Rapports was appealed to, and proposed a decree annulling the action of the municipality as illegal. Barnave persuaded the Assembly to widen the decree into a law of general application, which declared “ that citizens have the right of meeting peacefully and of forming free societies among themselves, on condition that they observe the laws which control all citizens.” This decree, while still leaving the municipalities power to stop meetings which caused disturbance, put the Jacobins above the reach of personal hostility.²

“ Lameth was already very dear to all patriots, but since his wound it is idolatry,” wrote Desmoulins. His friends crowded his sick-chamber, deputations from the National Guards poured in, his little daughter played upon the bed. ‘ If Greuze had but been there to paint the scene ! ’ sighs one enthusiast. Other deputations came too ; from the municipal workshops for the unemployed, from various patriotic societies, from the “ Société Fraternelle.” All brought addresses, to which the invalid who was suffering much pain had to reply. It is a wonder that he got well, but he recovered quickly, and

¹ Halem, pt. ii. 245–6. The Jacobins sent a circular to the affiliated Societies asking for their opinions on duelling (18 Dec., Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 421).

² 13 Nov., *Moniteur*, vi. 376–7 ; *Journal des Débats*, no. 504, p. 10 ; *Procès-verbal*, no. 470, p. 22, vol. 36.

early in December he was able to return the visit of the "Société Fraternelle," who, as they assured him, had waited for the day "with the impatience which moves a thirsty stag, and makes him run to seek a source of living water."¹ The usual calumnies flew about Paris; one party said that the sack of de Castries's hôtel had been arranged in the Jacobins' by Barnave and Menou;² that Alexandre could have stopped it; that Charles was only pretending to be badly wounded. The other said that de Castries's sword was poisoned. A witty member of the Right nicknamed the mob "the Court of Cassation."³ The lesson had been salutary and we hear of no more duels between deputies.

During Barnave's presidency, the Jacobins, on Dubois-Crancé's proposal, commissioned David to paint a picture of the oath of the Tennis-Court, and sent a deputation to the Assembly to ask that the court itself might be preserved as a national monument.⁴ The deputation, which brought a flowery address written by Mirabeau, was received on November 6th. It came as a pleasant relief after the storm over the Corsican deputation, and an order was made to print the address and Barnave's presidential reply in the *procès-verbal*. The address was so printed; but not the reply, although Barnave had it by him in writing, for there is a copy of it among his papers.⁵ This is a striking instance of his freedom from vanity, as he had received a kind of ovation in the Jacobins' over this very reply. The deputation which had taken the address to the Manège was reporting

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 53, p. 10; Gorsas, xviii. 212, 250, 403-5; *Discours imprimés par ordre de la Société Fraternelle*, &c., p. 8. The newspapers are full of addresses.

² *Gazette universelle*, 14 Nov., p. 1399. Barnave and Menou were not at the meeting after the duel. See Halem, pt. ii. 233, &c., and Carra, *Annales patriotiques*, v. 681. Halem and Carra were present.

³ Gorsas, xviii. 225, 25 Nov. Desmoulins uses the phrase about a week later (no. 53, p. 2).

⁴ See Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 330-3, for the papers printed by the Club two months later. The date on them, 28 Oct., is a mistake; it should be 31 Oct., see Halem, pt. ii. 109. The picture was to be paid for by the members' subscriptions for an engraving.

⁵ *A. N. W.* 12. 9 (not in his hand). The *Moniteur's* version is not the same. *Procès-verbal*, no. 463, p. 25, vol. 35.

to the Club on the 7th, and the spokesman, when congratulating the Society on Barnave's answer, used the words : " Barnave, all whose battles are victories." " Every one applauded and looked at the young man thus praised, who was present," says Halem, and he was requested to repeat the answer. " He did so, and once more the room rang with applause."

Halem might well write a little later : " I hope that the noble Barnave's head will not be turned by all the incense that is daily burnt before him. But I credit him with too strong a soul for that." And he adds that there are patriots who criticize him continually and remind him that he is mortal. " A certain Brissot de Warville has had a letter to him printed in these last days, with the epigraph :

' De votre honneur jaloux,
Tremblez que votre nom ne péricisse avant vous.'

" He is especially displeased with his report on the colonies. . . . The tract was being distributed at the doors of the Jacobin Club, where Barnave himself was present." ¹

¹ Halem, pt. ii. 205-6, 213-14.

CHAPTER XIX

“ L’AFFAIRE DES COLONIES ”

It was over the colonial question that Barnave threw away his popularity and faced obloquy ; and the accusations which the affair gave rise to dogged him to the end of his life and were reproduced at his trial. The intricacies of this difficult question were not widely understood by his own generation ; if one may judge from what has been written, one might almost venture to say that his part in it has never been understood since that generation passed away. His enemies were plausible and they have succeeded in creating permanent misunderstanding, while their charges have often been repeated ; his vindication can only be found in his own speeches and reports, imperfectly given in the *Moniteur*. Yet there can be no doubt, when the facts are known, that his conduct was consistent throughout, that it was prompted by the purest patriotism, and that in pursuing it he did not hesitate to sacrifice himself. Whether he was mistaken in the general policy which he advocated, must remain a matter of opinion. In treating of this large subject we shall confine ourselves strictly to the controversial part of his activities.

It is, we believe, uncontested, that at the time of the Revolution the colonies were of paramount importance to French commerce and manufactures and to the French Navy, for which the merchant fleet, called into being by the colonial trade, formed a nursery. This was well understood, and a foreign observer, de Staël, was only echoing the general opinion when he called the colonies, “ France’s principal source of riches and abundance,” and said that were she to lose them, “ the commerce of this Empire will be reduced to a very small affair.”¹ The chief colonies were sugar and coffee growing islands in the West Indies, and of these by far the most important was St. Domingo, the western portion of the island of Hayti, the rest of which belonged to Spain. St. Domingo was

¹ De Staël (7 Feb. 1790), p. 157.

probably the richest colony in the world, and the value of its trade to the mother-country was roughly computed as covering two-thirds of the value of the whole commerce of France.¹ It is of St. Domingo that we shall speak almost exclusively.

In those days the modern idea of a colony as a self-governing state for whose benefit the mother-country exists, was unknown ; it was rather regarded as a commercial establishment which must pay heavily for the privilege of being protected. The French colonies did not pay in tribute but in exclusive trade. They supplied France, and France alone, with raw articles for home consumption, for manufacture, for re-exportation ; and large industries of sugar-refining, the weaving or dyeing of cotton or silk, the preparing of leather,² depended on the products which they sent. They also formed a close market for the productions of France ; both for provisions grown by agriculturists in the country and for the manufactures of the towns. Thus it happened that not only the wealth of a few but the actual livelihood of large numbers of Frenchmen were bound up with the prosperity of the colonies. French commerce insisted on a monopoly, and French commerce and manufactures had been so much hampered by bad government and prejudice, that they would have stood no chance in an open market, and needed to be fostered as yet by protection. Such was the opinion of Barnave, to whom free trade was an ideal which would certainly be realized in the future.³ The monopoly was a great grievance to the planters, who were compelled to sell everything to France and to buy everything from her. As things were, a measure of free trade had to be allowed occasionally, for the French merchant fleet could not always keep St. Domingo adequately supplied with food, and in times of dearth the Governor was obliged to let in grain from America.

The original inhabitants of St. Domingo had been exterminated by the Spaniards ; Europeans were unable to cultivate

¹ Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Révolution de St. Domingue*, ii. 277.

² L. Deschamps, *Les Colonies pendant la Révolution. La Constituante et la Réforme coloniale* (Paris, 1898), pp. 4-8.

³ *Œuvres*, ii. 210, *Sur les Colonies*.

the soil in the hot, unhealthy climate, and negroes were imported, as they were in the other West Indian islands. The negroes died quickly, and fresh importations were constantly necessary if the colony was to be worked at high profits; hence arose the regular slave trade. The French had the reputation of being kinder to the slaves than the English; ‘bad was the best,’ and all the problems common to slave-owning countries existed in an acute form in St. Domingo.

The whites in St. Domingo were divided into two classes: the planters, who owned or managed landed property, in the development of which many of them had invested large sums of money; and the small whites, who carried on various occupations in the towns, and as they suffered less from the monopoly were more loyal to the mother-country than the planters were. Between whites and blacks stood a large population of half-breeds, offspring of white and black, of every shade and divided into a hierarchy of nine classes.¹ They were often called mulattoes, from the name of that particular mixture of races which was half black and half white; and so, for clearness’ sake, we will call them, the proper French term *gens de couleur* being ambiguous in English. Most of the mulattoes were free, and both they and the negroes who had obtained their freedom owned property; indeed they were said to own a third of the landed property and a quarter of the slaves in St. Domingo between them.² As to their position, no one in the colonies had political rights, and while by some statutes the mulattoes had been given such civil rights as the whites had, by others they had been degraded, and in practice they were not allowed to hold any offices. The exact figures of the population of St. Domingo were not accurately known; they may be estimated at 40,000 whites, 30,000 free men of colour (mulattoes or negroes) and 452,000 slaves.³

¹ Moreau de Saint-Méry’s *Description topographique . . . de la partie françoise de l’Isle St. Domingue* (Philadelphie, 1797, 2 vols.), i. 71.

² So the mulatto, Raimond, stated to the Assembly, 14 May 1791 (*Moniteur*, viii. 399).

³ For whites and slaves I have taken the estimate of M. Deschamps, who gives a number of contemporary estimates (loc. cit., Appendix, 290). He puts the mulattoes at 28,000; but Raimond says there were

It was not superior physical force which kept this huge slave population under. The blacks were chiefly massed on lonely plantations, the mountainous nature of the country made military operations difficult, and had the slaves chosen to rise (as they eventually did), the garrison and the local troops would not have been strong enough to cope with them. They were restrained by the prestige of the whites, who were to them beings of another sphere. The mulattoes formed an intermediary class, despised and oppressed by the whites, revered in a secondary degree by the blacks, whom they in their turn oppressed and despised. Colour prejudice was stronger than the distinction between slave and free, and a quarteroon slave would have disdained to serve a free negro.¹ The planters were more liberally disposed to the mulattoes than were the small whites, who had little but their colour to boast of. The mulattoes, for similar reasons, were more cruel to their slaves than were the whites.

St. Domingo was divided into three provinces. The " North," whose capital was le Cap Français, commonly called le Cap, was the wealthiest and contained the larger number of small whites. The " West "—a misnomer for it was the central province, was nearly as rich ; its capital was Port-au-Prince. The " South " was poorer and less developed. The characteristics of the three provinces were in many ways dissimilar and events moved differently in each. While one province was in a ferment, another might be quiet ; while the mulattoes were fighting the whites in one, they might be joining with them in another. This accounts for some of the contradictory statements that were made about St. Domingo.

Like other French colonies, St. Domingo was governed by an Intendant and a military Governor. The government was notoriously bad and the grievances of the colonials were many and severe. They naturally hailed the Revolution as a benefit to themselves, adopted its ideas, without any intention of

30,000, and Pamphile de Lacroix says they were equal to the whites in number (ii. 272).

¹ *Observations d'un Habitant des Colonies*, on Grégoire's memorandum in favour of the mulattoes of 16 Dec. 1789. (68 pp., n. d., n. p.) (*B. M. F. R.* 412), pp. 21-2.

extending them to mulattoes or blacks, and took their government into their own hands. They set the authority of the Governor at naught and, without leave asked, elected three provincial Assemblies, which sat in the three capitals¹ and took upon themselves to administrate and to reform. In the spring of 1790 the Parochial Assemblies elected a General Assembly, which sat at St. Marc, a coast town of the “ West.”

St. Domingo also sent representatives to the National Assembly, electing them while France was choosing deputies, but without any permission from the King. Some were elected by the planters in Paris, some in the colony. The deputation had no legal status, but the members threw in their lot with the Tiers-état and were welcomed as allies. They presented themselves in the Jeu de Paume, were allowed to sign the oath, and were finally admitted into the Assembly to the number of six (July 4th). The other colonies followed suit here, as they did in electing Assemblies, and their deputies were also admitted to the National Assembly.²

But the colonial deputies were not the only representatives of the colonies in Paris, where there was a large and wealthy association of owners of property in St. Domingo, called, from the name of the man in whose house it met, the “ Club Massiac,” or “ Société de Massiac.” It had been founded with the object of forwarding the interests of the colony, and it kept up a correspondence with similar societies in the seaport towns, with the various chambers of commerce and with St. Domingo.³ The members of this club were not slow to perceive that ideas of liberty and equality would be of dangerous application in a

¹ These provincial Assemblies were sometimes called “ Comités ” ; e. g. “ le Comité du Cap.”

² Guadeloupe was allowed five (the Assembly, which had fixed the number at two, admitted three others) ; Martinique two ; Pondichéry two ; the Isle de France two.

³ “ Règlement de la Société correspondante des colonies françaises séante à Paris, hôtel de Massiac,” 23 Aug. 1789 (In *A. N. W.* 14). A committee of twenty-five met frequently and reported occasionally to the General Assembly. This committee was called “ Comité des Colonies,” and continued to be so called and addressed after the Colonial Committee of the National Assembly had come into being. A committee of the planters in Paris also used the same name. Hence confusion.

slave state, and as they wished to keep the affairs of St. Domingo separate from those of France and were extremely anxious that the National Assembly should not interfere, they thought that the colonies had made a false step in sending representatives. In consequence they looked on the colonial deputies with much disfavour. Yet they had points in common with these deputies, for both were, in general, hostile to French Commerce, and Commerce, Club Massiac, colonial deputies, and all the whites in the colonies agreed in a common dread that the Assembly would bring ruin on them by touching slavery and the slave trade. This dread did not make the colonials set aside their differences, and it appears from the full and well-kept *procès-verbal* of the Club Massiac, that all through the critical time when St. Domingo was rioting its way to ruin, a large part of the colonial mind was continually occupied with petty quarrels.

The Club Massiac carried on an active propaganda in support of its opinions,¹ and directed it chiefly against a powerful opponent, the " Société des Amis des Noirs." This society, founded in imitation of the English anti-slavery societies by Brissot, Condorcet and others, was almost as active as its foe, and spread its doctrines through Brissot's paper, the *Patriote français*, as well as through pamphlets. Its programme was, gradual emancipation of the slaves—an item which was shelved in 1789²—abolition of the slave-trade, and political rights for the mulattoes.

The National Assembly was reluctant to take the colonies in hand ; hardly any deputies wished to discuss slavery and other delicate questions before the reorganization of France was completed, and a first demand for a colonial committee was rejected (December 23rd, 1789). But riots and irregularities were reported from St. Domingo ; the Provincial Assembly of the North defied the Governor, declared his orders illegal, and opened the ports to American vessels. St. Domingo was practically in insurrection, and fears that it would cast off the

¹ See *Gazette universelle*, 11 and 12 April 1790. This paper contains many notices of the doings of the club.

² See the address to the National Assembly by Brissot, 21 Jan. 1790 ; *Archives parlementaires*, xi. 274.

French yoke were widespread and well founded. Martinique was in a state almost as dangerous, and it was known that the general unrest in the colonies was chiefly caused by the uncertainty the colonials felt as to what the National Assembly might do. Petitions poured in from alarmed Commerce, and it became necessary to act. On March 2nd the formation of a Colonial Committee of twelve was decreed, on the motion of Alexandre Lameth. Barnave was, from the first, the reporter and leading spirit of this Committee.

The problem which lay before Committee and Assembly was insoluble.¹ The situation was one of those which offer only a choice of evils, where wrong must be done to some one and the question becomes, how to do the least permanent evil. To touch slavery was to lose the colonies, either entirely or as a source of profit; to lose the colonies was to ruin French Commerce when France was on the verge of bankruptcy; it was to bring unemployment upon great numbers of Frenchmen in a time of poverty and upheaval; to imperil the Revolution, which had already made many enemies, by setting a large part of the nation against it while its fate still hung in the balance.² Gradual emancipation was out of the question as an open policy, for the planters, who wanted security, assurance for the future and not a prospect of gradual diminution of profit, would not have heard of it; and the planters were masters of the situation, France being too poor to buy them out. They were already on the verge of rebellion; they did not desire independence unless they were, as they said, forced into it;³ but if France were to drive them too far or to keep them on tenterhooks, they intended, so they let it be known, either to try to stand alone, or to put themselves

¹ This was the judgement of Mathieu Dumas, who had seen slavery in St. Domingo with horror, and entirely approved of Barnave's policy (*Souvenirs*, ii. 25, &c.).

² Camille Desmoulins puts this well in his cruel *Jean Pierre Brissot démasqué* (*Œuvres*, i. 277, &c.).

³ *Mémoire des députés de St. Domingue*, end of 1789 or early in 1790; quoted by M. Brette in *Les gens de couleur libres et leurs Députés en 1789* (*La Révolution française*, xxix. 405). The *Gazette universelle* has frequent notices which throw light on the situation. See also letter from a planter in *Gazette de Paris*, 2 March 1790.

under the protection of Great Britain, and Pitt, it was supposed, would hardly refuse such a prize. The abolition of the slave trade met with the same obstacles ; the planters regarded the trade as essential and the whole shipping interest was up in arms at the idea. Mirabeau, to his honour, made an eloquent attack on it in the *Jacobins* ',¹ but a crusade was considered outside practical politics and was not attempted by the " *Amis des Noirs*." The Colonial Committee and the Assembly had thus to decide whether it were better to sacrifice principles by a tacit sanction of slavery, or to sacrifice France to principles.

There was no hesitation as to the answer. Before the Committee had reported, practically all France had become convinced that the colonies must be kept. Even the " *Amis des Noirs* " abandoned the question of slavery for the time, and when they were charged with trying to abolish it, were wont to reply with warmth, that this was a calumny.²

It may be contended that it would have been better to lose the colonies and to imperil the Revolution by insisting on the gradual extinction of slavery or on the abolition of the slave trade. But if Barnave went wrong here, he went wrong with the Constituent Assembly and with thinking France, and it is not for this decision that he has been blamed. What he has been blamed for is his belief that the Assembly, having made this great sacrifice of principle, ought to be ready to make such further, lesser sacrifices as were indispensable if the colonies were to be kept quiet and prosperous.

He approached the colonial question without any bias. He was not personally interested and did not speak in the earlier debates ; indeed as late as December 29th his mind was not

¹ On 28 Feb. 1790 ; see *Gazette universelle*, 2 March 1790, p. 368 ; Dumont, 310. Cf. Montigny, vii. 112, &c., and Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 17, note, and 74.

² e. g. Brissot in *Patriote français*, 7 Dec. 1790, p. 4. " M. Cloots has not read us, for he would have seen that there is no more question of freeing the blacks in the writings of the *Amis des Noirs* than there is of conquering Bengal." And 21 Feb. 1791, p. 187 : " Meanwhile I must tell Commerce that these men [the planters] impose on them deliberately when they say that the Society demands the abolition of slavery. It is an atrocious lie, already contradicted more than twenty times, and only repeated by these impudent calumniators to deceive our brothers in France."

made up, and we find him asking that another question might be discussed rather than the victualling of St. Domingo, on the ground that “ it was not yet known whether it was more important to have colonies or not to have them.”¹ It is often said that he was influenced by the Lameths, who had large properties in St. Domingo ; it is therefore interesting to see what the Lameths thought. In 1789 the three brothers, as well as Duport, belonged to the “ Amis des Noirs.”² Charles, who through his wife had a share in the great plantations of his father-in-law,³ had much at stake ; it does not appear that Alexandre and Théodore had anything. And this is how Charles spoke in a debate on December 3rd : “ I am a landowner . . . and one of the largest landowners in St. Domingo ; but God forbid that a base interest should dictate my opinions, that it should make me sacrifice those great principles of humanity, of equity, of liberty, which I have sworn to defend. No, I would never swerve from them, though I had to lose all my property ! I declare myself in favour of the admission of the deputies of the half-breeds to the Assemblies, and for the freedom of the blacks. But as this freedom is a fruit which can only be digested by prepared stomachs, I believe that the blacks should be prepared for it ; but our whites must be prepared for it too, and still more our merchants.” The “ Amis des Noirs ” passed a vote of thanks to him for having offered to sacrifice his property, if need were, for the gradual emancipation of the blacks.⁴ No one ever accused the Lameths of avarice, and Charles, who never bought a slave,⁵ was certainly sincere here. No personal considerations weighed with Barnave and the Lameths in the line they afterwards took.

Early in 1790 Barnave informed himself, and on Feb. 23rd he was speaking on the subject in the Jacobins’, when, as we learn, both he and the whole Club were of opinion that since

¹ *Journal des Débats*, no. 132, pp. 1-2.

² *Tableau des membres de la Société des Amis des Noirs, année 1789*. 8 pp. (n. p.). B. M. 911, b. 19(5).

³ See his letter, *Moniteur*, v. 727-8 (24 Sept. 1790). Laborde had property in St. Domingo, but even Barnave’s enemies do not suppose him to have been influenced by this.

⁴ *Patriote français*, 5 Dec. 1789, p. 3 ; 7 Dec. 1789, p. 2.

⁵ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 67, pp. 92-3.

the Revolution could not be carried out in the colonies, the colonials ought not to have joined in it by sending deputies to France.¹ It is worthy of note that he was last on the list of members elected to the Colonial Committee, on March 3rd, only nine votes ahead of the next man,² so that his election seems to have been a matter of chance. The other members were: Thouret and Le Chapelier, both too busy elsewhere to take a leading part; Bégouen and Garésché, merchants; Pelerin de la Buxière, a retired doctor; Payen-Boisneuf, a landowner in St. Domingo; Nompère de Champagny, a naval officer (afterwards Napoleon's duc de Cadore); Alquier, a very clever lawyer of La Rochelle; two deputies of St. Domingo, Gerard, who was a liberal, and the comte de Reynaud; and Alexandre Lameth. Cazalès and Maury were "suppléants." The composition of the Committee was, it will be seen, eminently fair.

A report had been ordered in five days, and Barnave was chosen to tackle the thorny subject.³ His first thought apparently was, that it would be best to leave things as much as possible alone, and there is among his papers a note for a bill which runs thus: "The National Assembly, considering that any kind of change in the method of cultivating the colonies and in the branches of commerce which relate to it could not be effected in a manner satisfactory to humanity and compatible with national prosperity, unless it were preceded by measures - - - and well thought out, such as the urgent business of the Constitution does not at present permit it to undertake; declares that everything shall remain as it is, and that no preceding decrees shall be taken as contravening this, and

¹ *Gazette de Paris*, 4 March 1790; letter from a planter.

² Duquesnoy, ii. 439.

³ M. Deschamps' statement (*Les Colonies*, p. 88), that Barnave got up his report in February from information supplied by the planters, is clearly erroneous. The letter (from *A. N. D.* xxv. 85) quoted in proof, from Billard, President of the Club Massiac, to Ladebat, though dated 13 Feb. 1790 obviously refers to the "Instructions" of 1791, when Barnave asked colonials for their opinion. I was unable to find this letter though I searched for it carefully; but I found one in almost exactly similar terms from L. B. to Ladebat, dated merely "du mercredi 13" (i. e. Wed. 13 April 1791), in *D.* xxv. 88 (numbered 48).

leaves it to the wisdom of succeeding legislatures to do whatever is best to be done.”¹

This bill left the door open to reform, but it would by no means have satisfied the colonials, whose terrors would have been merely adjourned without being laid. The Committee came to the conclusion that the colonies would be lost unless the colonials were reassured, and this meant that a definite policy must be adopted. In Barnave’s mind a definite policy could not be dissociated from ideas of reform, but he wished to introduce it in the only manner in which it could be introduced without danger ; that is, with the consent of the colonials. “ The reform of the colonial régime,” he writes, “ had to be attempted either in an abrupt and violent manner, the disastrous effects of which were alarming to humanity as well as to policy, or gradually, by the influence of enlightenment and persuasion, without shedding blood in the colonies and without striking a fatal blow at the prosperity of the mother-country ; this last system is the one I have always professed.”² He says elsewhere : “ As the two revolutions in the colonies, emancipation and independence, necessarily go together, policy and humanity required that both of them should be gradual.”³

To effect reforms in this way extreme caution was needed and much reticence ; the colonials must be led, not driven, persuaded to grant, not forced to make concessions. Everything said in the Assembly was reported in the colonies, and Barnave could not expatiate on his ideas of reform, but he kept them always before him, and his belief was that when once the colonials felt secure and enjoyed a just and free government of their own, the very force of progress, combined with persuasion, would be strong enough to bring about a gradual change in the obnoxious and illogical conditions under which they lived. If his hopes seem unduly sanguine, it must be remembered that it was the day of the triumph of ideas.

It seemed to the Committee that the best way of reassuring the colonials without committing the Assembly too deeply,

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. 96. In his own hand.

² Letter to *Moniteur*, 2 April 1792, xii. 99.

³ *A. N. W.* 15. *Registre* i. 130.

would be to give them, within certain limits, an initiative in framing their own constitution. This was, in fact, a promise that the Assembly would not legislate on what the colonials considered the essential point in their constitution, namely the status of persons in the colonies, before the colonies had expressed their wishes.¹ Further, in order to avoid fresh disturbances, the Committee decided to legalize the colonial assemblies already elected, and to allow them to express the wishes of the colonies.

The Assembly awaited the report with anxiety. The general desire was to pacify both Commerce and the planters without directly legalizing slavery, and to avoid all discussion of delicate questions, which might have a bad effect on the colonies. Thus an attempt made by Maury to put the Left in a dilemma by forcing a debate on the slave trade was burked.²

Barnave read his short report on March 8th. He spoke of the great importance of the colonies to France and the Revolution. " It will be felt," he said, " that before everything else we must guard against the evils which threaten us from nearer quarters, and that all other speculations become irrelevant when the sacred interest of the Revolution and the destiny of several million Frenchmen, dependent on the prosperity of our commerce and the possession of our colonies, are concerned." ³ He attributed the present unrest to bad government, an oppressive monopoly, and fears for the future; the remedies he suggested were: (1) to give the colonies as soon as possible a constitution suited to their peculiar conditions; (2) to modify the monopoly after hearing both sides; (3) to reassure colonial opinion. " The third object concerns the alarms which have been raised as to the application of certain decrees. Here you should, you can, speak only one language—that of truth, which means that you must deny the extension which has been falsely attributed to these decrees. You cannot have

¹ Barnave in his report of 11 and 12 Oct. 1790, pp. 95-6; *Procès-verbal*, vol. xxxiii.

² 2 March. Duquesnoy, ii. 438.

³ *Rapport fait à l'Assemblée nationale le 8 mars 1790 au nom du Comité des Colonies par M. Barnave, député du Dauphiné*. Paris, Imp. Nat., 1790, 22 pp., p. 8 (*Procès-verbal*, vol. xiv.)

changed anything where the colonies are concerned, because the laws you have decreed were not made for them ; you cannot have changed anything, because the public welfare and humanity itself presented insurmountable obstacles to the course which your hearts would have bidden you follow. Say it now, therefore, since uncertainty has arisen ; say that you have changed nothing ; this declaration is enough ; after it has been made, no further alarms can be felt.”¹ There were men, he said, who had been trying to raise revolt in the colonies by spreading such alarms ; these men must not be confounded “ with certain peaceable citizens who seek to discover by reflection the means of softening the destiny of the most unfortunate portion of the human race ; ” by whom, says Alexandre Lameth, he meant the “ Amis des Noirs.”² He ended with an appeal to the patriotism of the colonials.

His bill was in three parts. A preamble affirmed that the colonies were not included under the French Constitution. Six articles followed : (1) Each colony was to be authorized to make known its wishes about its constitution, subject to certain general principles. (2) In colonies where a Colonial Assembly freely elected by “ the citizens ” already existed, the wishes of the colony were to be expressed by it ; in other colonies such assemblies were to be elected forthwith. (3) Instructions were to be sent to the colonies regarding : (a) “ the methods of providing for the formation of Colonial Assemblies where they do not exist ; ” (b) the general bases to which the Assemblies must conform in their proposals for their constitution. (4) These proposals were to be submitted to the National Assembly for examination and decree. (5) The existing Colonial Assemblies were provisionally legalized for administrative purposes. (6) The National Assembly was to decree about the monopoly, after having heard the Colonial Assemblies and the representatives of French Commerce. Last came a declaration : “ For the rest, the National Assembly declares that it has not intended to make any changes in any of the branches of commerce, direct or indirect, between France and her colonies ; puts the colonials and their properties under the special protection of the nation ; declares

¹ *Rapport*, p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, p. 17 ; A. Lameth, ii. 40, note.

that any one who may endeavour to excite risings against them is acting criminally towards the nation ; judging favourably of the motives which have directed the citizens of the said colonies, it declares that there is no ground of accusation against them ; it expects from their patriotism the maintenance of quiet and an inviolable fidelity to the nation, the law, and the king." ¹

The Assembly drew a breath of relief ; " the prudence of the views expressed united all interests and all opinions," says the *procès-verbal*. The feeling that discussion was undesirable was strong, and most of the deputies rose to shout *aux voix !* Mirabeau and Pétion tried to speak, but the Assembly would not hear them and the decree passed, almost unanimously, amidst applause and enthusiasm. The deputies of Commerce rushed off to send couriers to their cities ; the planters and creoles in Paris, who were waiting anxiously in the Tuileries Gardens, congratulated each other.² Satisfaction was general, and Barnave dates the beginning of his great popularity from this decree.³

The criticism which might be made on it in the light of subsequent events is : that the colonials were unfit to govern themselves, and that it would have been better to silence their Assemblies from the first and to rule St. Domingo with a firm hand, as a crown colony. We may answer, that the colonials had not yet demonstrated their incapacity, and that to deprive them of the rights they had claimed and were already exercising would have been contrary to the principles of the Assembly. It is also certain that they would not have submitted.

The policy of the Assembly, as embodied in this decree, was to keep the colonies by conceding slavery. Here Barnave and his opponents were at one. But he, having made this gigantic concession in defiance of principle, was determined that it should not remain fruitless. He would not risk the loss of the colonies by insisting on minor reforms prematurely. He wished to pacify them before attempting anything else,

¹ *Rapport*, 20-2 ; *Moniteur*, iii. 553.

² *Procès-verbal*, no. 223, p. 3, vol. 14 ; *Moniteur*, iii. 554 ; *Gazette universelle*, 10 March, p. 398.

³ *Œuvres*, ii. 112.

for he was well aware that there was always a possibility of a slave revolt and that the longer the whites refused to settle down peacefully the more likely it became.

His opponents, on the contrary, were ready to risk everything for the sake of doing something in the way of reform; they usually scoffed at the idea of a slave revolt, and they asseverated that minor reforms could be forced on the whites without danger.

Their three chief leaders were the deputies Grégoire and Pétion and the journalist Brissot, all members of the “ Amis des Noirs.” Mirabeau was also hostile, but as his opposition was not active we do not know how he proposed to carry out the reforms he desired, nor even what they were.¹

It is impossible to speak without respect of the Abbé Grégoire, a country curé afterwards Bishop of Blois, who defended his religion in the Convention with a martyr’s courage, though he did not meet a martyr’s fate. But though a sincere Christian and an amiable man, the Christian virtues of meekness and charity were at this period alien to his public character; he had an exaggerated idea of his own importance,² and was given to violent and indiscreet language.

Pétion, the lawyer of Chartres, the wisest and most moderate of the three, has fallen into worse repute than he deserves. He was an egoist in whom an overweening self-complacency had effaced all the finer feelings and he was fatuous to an almost incredible degree. When his political conduct was assailed his shrieks of injured surprise were hysterical: “ All the acts of my life have passed under your eyes,” he writes to his constituents; “ you know if I am a good son, a good husband, a good father, a good citizen.”³ But his vanity may be partly excused as the effect of adulation on a mediocre mind, and he was in no way a bad man, being sincere, well-meaning, even courageous, while his “ cheerful serenity,” much admired by his friends, who did not perceive that a good deal of it sprang

¹ Except that he originally wished to approach Great Britain with a view to a joint abolition of the slave trade; see Montigny, vii. 114, &c., where a manuscript speech of his is printed.

² Witness his letter on the occasion of the reunion of the Clergy (June 1789), exhibited in the Musée des Archives (No. 1077). I do not know if it has been printed.

³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 86, p. 37.

from insensibility, stood the test of misfortune admirably. His speeches often show much common sense and power of reasoning, and if he thought himself a great orator, others also thought it of him. His extreme self-relish smacks of Pepys, and there is an element of the comic in his sayings and doings which makes it impossible to dislike him heartily. With Romilly who knew him, one wonders how he came to have so much influence, and his reputation for good looks is equally puzzling. It is explained by Bertrand de Moleville, who says that he was " quite handsome at a distance." ¹

Brissot, of whom we shall say more later on, was a powerful and convincing writer, all the stronger in attack because he was not scurrilous and left private life alone. He had an imposing manner of assuming that he was unanswerable, a fluency which almost amounted to eloquence, and the art of making diffuseness seem pithy. Probably the secret of the effect he produced, and still produces, lies in his gift for irritating or exciting his readers. Cool analysis shows that he confuses statement and argument, begs the premises of his triumphant syllogisms, and uses mutually destructive arguments; but readers, whether exasperated or delighted, are in no mood to analyse. His favourite figure which he used with great ability may be put thus, as he applied it to the colonies: To lose the colonies (or, a slave revolt; or, civil war in St. Domingo) would be disastrous; but (a) it is impossible, and (b) it would be advantageous. Or again: The whites are certain to do what the Assembly orders; (a) only the ignorant imagine that they will resist, (b) and if they do they must be made to obey by superior force.

Brissot hated Barnave; it is probable that jealousy of a younger man who had sprung into fame while tried ' warriors of liberty ' like himself suffered from want of recognition, mingled with a temperamental dislike of Barnave's moderation and common sense. As early as Barnave's speech on the Declaration of Rights, Brissot thought that he " deviated from the true principles," ² but hitherto he had not had the occasion to show, or perhaps to feel enmity.

¹ Romilly, i. 106; Bertrand de Moleville, *Histoire*, vi. 302, note.

² *Patriote français*, 3 Aug. 1789, p. 3.

Brissot fell upon Barnave for his report, reproaching him with abandoning principles, with ignorance, with presumption. Did he approve of the infamous slave-trade? Had he forgotten the mulattoes? It is not clear what Brissot wanted done, apparently the impossible, for he says: " I imagined that whilst reassuring Commerce with regard to its terrors, on the other hand the great principles of the Constitution would have been consecrated, or at least not affronted." ¹

It was a constant reproach of Brissot and his school, which includes some modern writers, that Barnave consulted the planters, the merchants, the deputies of Commerce, about the colonies, and was led entirely by them. A statement that the Club Massiac kept him supplied with information is enough to condemn him in the eyes of these judges, and " the Colonial Committee was packed with planters and their creatures," is an often repeated verdict. We shall see that Barnave was not led by the planters; that he opposed them whenever their views clashed with the interests of France. As to getting information from planters and merchants, it was so obviously his duty to seek it from the men whose interests were most concerned, that it is absurd to blame him for doing so. It happens, however, that whatever advice he had from individual planters, the Club Massiac gave him none. This society had done its best to prevent the formation of a Colonial Committee,² and when that Committee had been formed the society held aloof in cold hostility; it was not till the end of April 1791 that it showed any wish to co-operate with the Colonial Committee for the pacification of the colony. The *procès-verbal* of the society not merely confirms Barnave's statement that he never set foot in the Club,³ it shows that only those who were ignorant of the history and opinions of the Club would have thought it likely that he should.

Another document which would throw light on the whole

¹ *Patriote français*, 10 March 1790, p. 3.

² See notices in the *Procès-verbal* of the Society, and also a letter from the Colonial Society of Bordeaux, 5 Jan. 1790, thanking the Club for the steps it had taken to prevent it. *A. N. D.* xxv. 86, Dossier 826.

³ The *Procès-verbal*, authenticated copy in *A. N. W.* 14 (see note at end of chapter); *Moniteur*, xii. 99, letter of 2 April 1792.

history, the *procès-verbal* of the Colonial Committee, said to exist in the " Archives Coloniales," has disappeared.¹ As regards Barnave's doings this is not of much consequence, because in several of his speeches he gave accounts of his conduct in the Committee. None of his enemies, to whom the facts were well known, attempted to contradict him in any point, and his accounts may be taken as accurate.

In fighting to keep the colonies he stood in a manner alone, and responsibility rested on his shoulders to an unusual degree, though he had the Colonial Committee behind him, and though at first almost the whole Assembly was with him. His task was not one which appealed to any lover of liberty ; with him too it went against the grain, and he took it up from patriotic motives.² The eminent members who agreed with him left him to do the speaking, and among the colonial deputies he found only fitful supporters. The most in evidence among these deputies were, the estimable Moreau de Saint-Méry, who had done good service as an Elector of Paris and was learned about the colonies ; Artur Dillon, a dashing officer and an attractive man ; de Curt, a man of sense who often reported for the Naval Committee ; and the firebrand Gouy d'Arsy, a marquis planter who is said never to have seen his estates in St. Domingo, a flowery, endless speaker, one of the bores of the Assembly, who denounced the Minister of the Colonies, La Luzerne, at intervals, entered into single combats with Brissot, and published incessant pamphlets. Barnave would have done better without the help of these men, for though eager for liberty in France they were vowed to the status quo in the colonies, as were many of his commercial supporters.

He stood entirely aloof from these supporters in one cardinal point. While colonials and Commerce, inside the Assembly and out, used all the old arguments that have done duty so often in defence of slavery and the slave trade ; while even deputies who took no part in the matter except to vote, could console themselves with the reflection that negroes could only learn what liberty was by being forced to labour for the white

¹ Deschamps, Introduction, xii, xvi.

² See, *inter alia*, his speech of 11 May, 1791 ; *Moniteur*, viii. 375.

man,¹ Barnave kept clear of cant and humbug, and never said a single word in palliation of slavery.

With the “ Instruction,” promised in the decree of March 8th, and drawn up for the Colonial Committee by Barnave, we come to the second great colonial difficulty, the political status of the mulattoes and free negroes. Should they be made the equals of the whites by being given citizen rights? Barnave’s quarrel with Brissot and the philanthropists was not over slavery but over this question. It is true that Brissot and his friends never definitely abandoned gradual emancipation and the abolition of the slave trade, and that they obscured the issue by endless tergiversations. But they kept these objects well in the background and concentrated their efforts on the cause of the mulattoes. Here they made a stand, and were ready to wreck St. Domingo for the sake of giving the mulattoes votes and humbling the pride of the whites. They worked themselves into a fever of admiration for the half-breeds, who as slave-owners, equally interested with the whites in the maintenance of slavery² and with a worse reputation, were unpromising subjects for enthusiasm.

To do the “ Amis des Noirs ” justice, they looked on the mulatto franchise as the thin edge of the wedge. So did Barnave, and he too would have liked the mulattoes to have the franchise. In an early draft of the decree which was to accompany the ‘ Instruction,’ he expressly includes them among the citizens who were to be summoned to the Parochial Assemblies.³ But he soon became convinced that time must be taken over the measure and that the whites must be induced to grant it, not forced to suffer it.

Their hostile attitude towards this reform had been unmistakably shown. At first the mulattoes had been summoned to the Parochial Assemblies, but as soon as the whites began to misdoubt the intentions of the National Assembly the half-breeds were forbidden to sit; a planter who took their part was murdered, and other crimes against them were committed.

¹ *Correspondance de Thomas Lindet*, 105. Letter of 7 March 1790. (Paris, 1899.)

² See Raimond’s speech, 14 May 1791; *Moniteur*, viii. 399.

³ *A. N. W.* 13. 42 (in his own hand). See note 2, p. 336.

It seems doubtful whether the mulattoes in the colony wanted votes. Barnave says that they were at first only inclined to take part in the quarrels of the whites with no thought of a cause of their own.¹ But there were mulattoes in Paris, educated and intelligent men, who were fully alive to their own claims. They had no mandate from their fellows, yet under the leadership of one of their number, Raimond, they petitioned the Assembly that their representatives might be admitted, as those of the white colonials had been.² The " Amis des Noirs " encouraged these mulattoes, and by an injudicious advocacy embittered the whites and fanned the flames of discord which were already threatening the vast powder-magazine on which society in St. Domingo was built.

The decree of March 8th had given the colonies the initiative in framing their constitution, within limits ; the ' Instruction ' explained how this initiative was to be exercised and on what subjects. Existing Colonial Assemblies were directed to get themselves confirmed by the Parochial Assemblies which had elected them ; supposing they were not confirmed, or if they thought it better to dissolve, a new Assembly was to be elected. The lines to which the colonial constitution must conform were laid down thus : The Governor, appointed by the King, was to represent the executive power in each colony ; all laws passed in a Colonial Assembly must be submitted to the National Assembly to be decreed ; laws about internal matters could originate in the Colonial Assembly and might be executed provisionally with the Governor's sanction ; laws concerning relations with the mother-country must originate with the National Assembly, the Colonial Assemblies might only make suggestions. In treating of the matters on which the Colonial Assemblies were asked to express their wishes, the ' Instruction ' contained these two passages : (1) " In preparing the constitution of the colonies these Assemblies will themselves consider what the composition and the mode of convocation of the

¹ *Œuvres*, ii. 214.

² On 22 Oct. 1789 ; *Procès-verbal*, no. 105, p. 2, &c., vol. 6. See A. Brette, *Les Gens de couleur libres*, loc. cit., p. 326, &c. Grégoire wrote a report in their favour for the Comité de Vérification, but the matter was not decided.

Colonial Assemblies ought to be in the future.” (2) “ They [the Assemblies] will examine . . . what qualifications may be required to be an active citizen [i. e. a voter] and to fill various offices ; in short, everything that can be comprised in the construction of the government most fitted to ensure the happiness and tranquillity of the colonies.”¹ This made it quite clear that the status of the mulattoes would not be decided before the colonies had spoken ; that is, their political status, for it must always be remembered that there was never any question of depriving them of their civil status as free men.

In the ‘ Instruction ’ the Colonial Committee had to provide a form for the convocation of the Parochial Assemblies, which were to meet for the purpose of confirming or disallowing the Colonial Assemblies and, possibly, of electing new ones. This form would be a purely provisional one, it was to be used only for the present occasion when the circumstances were exceptional, and would not necessarily apply to any future Parochial Assemblies. Yet, provisional as the form was, a definite admission of the mulattoes to the Parochial Assemblies would certainly be construed as a premature settlement of the very question about which the colonies were to be consulted, while their definite exclusion would prejudice their claims in the future, and this the Committee was anxious to avoid. The mulattoes in Paris demanded that their rights should be clearly recognized, saying that the previous decree left the point vague, as hitherto the whites alone had been accounted “ citizens ” in St. Domingo.² The planters, on the other hand, and not only the planters but all who knew the colonies, assured the Committee that if the initiative on this point were not left to the whites, the colonies would be subverted.

The Committee knew that the question of coloured voters would be, in effect, relegated to the future, whatever the form

¹ *Instruction pour les Colonies. Présentée à l’Assemblée nationale au nom du Comité chargé de ce travail, le 23 mars 1790, par M. Barnave, Député du Dauphiné.* Paris, Imp. Nat., 28 pp., pp. 2 and 11 (B. M. F. 713).

² *A l’Assemblée nationale, Réclamation des citoyens de couleur des Isles et Colonies françaises sur le décret du 8 mars 1790.* 23 pp. (n.p.), p. 17 (B. M. F. R. 402).

of convocation now adopted, because the existing Colonial Assemblies were practically certain to be confirmed, whether the mulattoes were called to the Parochial Assemblies or no, and the wishes of the colonies would thus, in any case, be expressed by the whites. Considering all these circumstances, they thought it best to temporize, to shelve the question by employing a non-committal form of convocation and to leave the interpretation to the Colonials. They therefore adopted the form which had been used in Martinique, where colour prejudice was as high as in St. Domingo. This form did not exclude coloured men, it ignored them.¹ It became article iv in a series of eighteen, in which the directions contained in the 'Instruction' were summed up, and ran thus :

"Immediately after the proclamation and publication of the decree in each parish, all persons of twenty-five years of age and upwards owning land, or in default of such property domiciled in the parish for two years and paying a tax,² shall meet to form the parish assembly."

The other articles with which we are concerned are these : v and vi. If there is no Colonial Assembly, or if it has been dissolved, the Parochial Assemblies shall proceed to elect deputies. xii. If there is a Colonial Assembly, each Parochial Assembly must vote for its continuance or dissolution. xv. If the majority of parishes are in favour of a new Assembly, elections shall be proceeded with.³

Article iv was ambiguous ; taken by itself it meant one thing ; taken, as it was intended to be, in conjunction with the decree of March 8th and the rest of the 'Instruction,' its meaning was modified. The ambiguity was intentional, and in a provisional form of convocation it was defensible. It is difficult to see what else the Committee could have done. They were trying to pacify the colonies and could not, therefore, include the mulattoes definitely. It would, perhaps, have been better to exclude them definitely, but liberalism

¹ Barnave on 11 May 1791 ; *Le Hodey*, 25, p. 413.

² In Barnave's earlier draft, in which the articles are not divided, the phrase runs "domiciled in the parish for one year, without exception of colour." (*A. N. W.* 13. 42).

³ *Instruction*, pp. 21-6 ; *Moniteur*, iii. 726. (The *Moniteur* only gives a portion of the *Instruction*.)

forbade ; it is doubtful whether such a measure would have passed the Assembly ; and further, the Committee wished to encourage the whites to admit the mulattoes. Had conflicting parties let article iv alone it might have answered well enough : but this was too much to count upon. The intentional ambiguity of the wording was well understood by these conflicting parties. Before the debate the colonial deputies, afraid that the article would let the mulattoes in, begged Barnave to drop it, which he persistently refused to do.¹ The “ Amis des Noirs,” on their side, afraid that it would keep the mulattoes out, tried to persuade the Committee to designate them clearly. Barnave says : “ We constantly replied that the general terms did not introduce any exception, and that we were far from wishing to establish anything which might prejudice them ; but at the same time we constantly refused to add to the article these words, ‘ without exception of colour ’.”² Indeed the whole situation must have been clear to any one who took the trouble to understand it.

Barnave read the ‘ Instruction ’ on March 23rd ; it contained, besides directions, a paternal exhortation, warning the colonials of the dangers they ran in prolonging fermentation, and explaining to them that they could not hope to stand alone and would find more advantage in a connexion with France than with any other country. The ‘ Instruction ’ found general favour, except among the colonial deputies some of whom opposed it as too peremptory.

On March 28th took place a debate which became the source of endless incriminations. Grégoire announced that he had felt article iv to be equivocal and had intended to make a motion on it, but that as some of the colonial deputies, speaking through Dillon, had assured him that they did not mean to exclude the mulattoes, he would not bring his motion forward. A deputy of St. Domingo, Cocherel, protested against Dillon’s assertion which, he said, could only commit the colony represented by Dillon, Martinique. According to Brissot, Barnave’s face changed at this embarrassing incident.³

¹ Gouy d’Arsy, *Confession d’un député* (1791), 16, 18.

² May 13, 1791 ; Le Hodey, xxv. 455.

³ Brissot’s *Lettre à M. Barnave*, 30. Brissot says that Cocherel made

Other deputies felt as he did and there was a good deal of noise. The Assembly did not wish to consider Grégoire's " indiscreet proposition," as Charles Lameth called it, and though Grégoire insisted, a vote forbade discussion on this point.¹ Grégoire used to say afterwards that Barnave himself had told him the mulattoes were included in article iv. Barnave's account of the answer he gave him is, that he repeated the explanation which he had given to the " Amis des Noirs " who had been to the Colonial Committee, and said : " the wording of the article evidently does not imply any exclusion : if you want to ask for more you will make trouble in the colonies. This is what I said formally to the Bishop of Blois." Grégoire eventually acknowledged the truth of this.² That he was not satisfied at the time is evident, because he persisted in demanding an interpretation, and the Assembly to stop him vetoed discussion. As for Brissot, his account in the *Patriote* shows that he was aware of the intentional ambiguity.³ The ' Instruction ' was decreed, with two verbal alterations in the wording of articles xvii and xviii, made in deference to a criticism of Maury's.⁴

The " Amis des Noirs " saw their chance, and ever after spoke of article iv as if it had been a decree by itself and ordained as the fixed and final law for the colonies. Brissot's first wrath was turned less upon Barnave than upon Charles Lameth, who had helped to get Grégoire silenced. Lameth

a motion to exclude the mulattoes, which was fraudulently kept out of the *Procès-verbal* (cf. *Patriote français*, 29 March). This motion, given in the *Gazette de Paris*, 30 March, really was to exclude St. Domingo from the sphere in which the ' Instruction ' would hold good. The point, of which a great deal was made, seems of small importance.

¹ *Procès-verbal*, no. 243, p. 5, vol. 16. The *Journal des Débats*, no. 225, p. 6, and *Point du Jour*, viii. 223, are fuller than the *Moniteur*.

² Barnave on 13 May 1791 ; Grégoire on 24 Sept. 1791 ; Le Hodey, xxv. 455, and xxxiv. 270. Grégoire's *Mémoires* are so inaccurate as to be useless in studying the colonial question.

³ *Patriote français*, 29 March.

⁴ The ' Instruction ' does not appear in the *Procès-verbal*. It was passed, as above, and the reporter was empowered to make the verbal corrections required and to present them at the next sitting. As the wording of the corrections had been indicated, this did not seem necessary and was not done. See *Procès-verbal*, no. 243, pp. 5-7.

had been a favourite, but, as Brissot aptly remarked : " Brutus could not praise Cicero when he was basely caressing Caesar." ¹

With all their drawbacks the decrees of the 8th and 28th March preserved the colonies to France for the time being, by checking the tendency to rebellion. But fresh difficulties arose. The decrees were received with joy in every colony, and except in St. Domingo article iv was interpreted as not including the mulattoes.² In St. Domingo there were doubts, provoked by the attitude of Grégoire and the ill-advised insistence of the " Amis des Noirs," and unscrupulous men used these doubts to work up feeling against France. Article iv was described as a trap, and the Assembly was accused of giving the colony the initiative with one hand and taking it away with the other.³ The North, where there had been the worst disturbances, put faith in the Assembly and became loyal, and the Provincial Assembly of le Cap abjured its early illegalities and supported France staunchly. The West and South were divided, and the focus of disloyalty was the General Assembly sitting at St. Marc, the organ of the planters who hankered after independence. This Assembly had already arrogated to itself excessive powers, and now, impelled by fear and ambition, it set itself up as a rival to the National Assembly. The Naval Minister whose duty it was to notify the decrees was dilatory, but that of March 28th became unofficially known at St. Marc and to the General Assembly on April 26th. Nevertheless on May 28th the Assembly passed a " decree " by which it virtually claimed full sovereignty ; for the " decree " stated that no law about the interior of the colony was binding unless it had been made in the colony, and that, as regarded relations with France, no laws of the National Assembly should be executed until they had passed the Assembly of St. Domingo. This decree was to be offered to the National Assembly for " acceptance," and what this meant was made

¹ *Patriote français*, 8 April, p. 2.

² Barnave on 11 May 1791 ; *Le Hodey*, xxv. 413.

³ *Adresse de l'Assemblée provinciale de la Partie du Nord de St. Domingue à l'Assemblée Nationale* (28 June 1790), au Port-au-Prince, 1790. 13 pp., *A. N. D.* xxv. 86. Dossier 286. Read to the National Assembly, 4 Sept. 1790.

plain by a preamble, which said that St. Domingo would not be bound by any decree of the National Assembly to which it had not consented.¹ Neither did the General Assembly retreat from this position when the official notification of the decree and of the ' Instruction ' reached it ; on the contrary, it " decreed " its " adherence " so far as these decrees were not in contradiction to the rights of St. Domingo as laid down on May 28th.²

The further acts of the General Assembly were in the same spirit. It did indeed submit to getting itself confirmed by the parishes, but it disregarded the rest of the French decrees, altered the oath which the colonial troops had to take, disbanded them, and opened the ports of the colony to foreigners.³ The Governor, driven to act by this open rebellion, dissolved the Assembly, and resorting to force arrested some of its chief supporters, members of the Provincial Assembly of Port-au-Prince, after a fight. The General Assembly retorted by dismissing the Governor, by declaring Colonel Mauduit, the officer who had carried out his orders, a traitor, and by calling on its partisans to take up arms. The influence of the Provincial Assembly of le Cap kept the North firm, and the loyal inhabitants raised troops which joined with the Governor and marched upon St. Marc. It must be observed that the General Assembly, while flatly disobedient in action, had been profuse in expressions of loyalty to France, and its members had been clever enough to complicate matters by making it appear that they were fighting for reform and the Revolution against the Ancien Régime, represented by the Governor and his myrmidons. By this inversion of facts the simple crew of a French man-of-war, the *Léopard*, had been won over ; they now mutinied and went to the assistance of the General Assembly. Only the eighty-five most recalcitrant members of that assembly remained in St. Marc, and when they saw the troops coming they took refuge on this friendly ship, and resolved to sail for France, to lay their case in person before the National Assembly.

¹ See *Moniteur*, vi. 99.

² Ibid. On 1 June.

³ For the doings of the General Assembly, see Barnave's report of 11 and 12 Oct.

After a five weeks’ passage they arrived on Sept. 14th at Brest, and there the example of the *Léopard* encouraged the already disaffected fleet to break into open mutiny. The colonials lingered, enjoying their reception and encouraging the mutineers, till they were summoned by a decree of Sept. 20th to appear at the bar of the National Assembly.¹

Barnave had already prepared a report, but the arrival of the *Léopard* suspended it and he himself moved that the General Assembly should be heard before the report was made.² He was sincerely sorry for the unpleasant position of the fugitives, tried to make their errors clear to some of them who visited him, and promised to do all in his power to further any reasonable demands they might make.³

The eighty-five refused to be conciliatory, and took from the first an arrogant and hostile tone. When they appeared at the bar on Oct. 2nd, they expected to be allowed to sit among the deputies like honoured guests—a concession which Barnave prevented—and one of them delivered an address eulogizing their own conduct.⁴ Nevertheless the Committee invited them to a conference on Oct. 3rd. This meeting, which lasted four hours, was attended by the whole Committee, Thouret, the president, taking the chair, and by six representatives of the eighty-five. Barnave explained to them the illegal, the criminal nature of their actions, and pointed out that their “decree” of May 28th amounted to a declaration of independence. As one of them giving an account of the conference naïvely says: “All that the commissioners could say on this subject was useless; minds were made up; nothing could change them.”⁵ Barnave told them that to offer a decree for “acceptance” meant that there was no power to reject it, at which they disingenuously expressed great surprise. He said further that it was a principle of the National Assembly never to presume bad intentions, and that though

¹ *Moniteur*, v. 705-6.

² 30 Sept., *Moniteur*, vi. 15.

³ This appears from drafts of a letter to one of them with whom he was acquainted. *A. N. W.* 12. 17, 20, 21.

⁴ *Moniteur*, vi. 38; *Le Hodey*, xvi. 201.

⁵ *Observations sur la situation politique de St. Domingue, par M. de Pons, habitant du quartier d’Ouanaminthe, Isle et Côte St. Domingue.* Paris, 27 Nov. 1790 (101 pp.), pp. 45-7. (*B. M. F. R.* 403.)

their acts as an Assembly would probably be annulled, they would be given opportunity to justify themselves as individuals. The eighty-five averred that they had brought with them from St. Domingo papers which contained their justification ; but when the Committee asked for these documents, they said that they must be allowed fifteen days to arrange them before handing them over. The Committee then offered to sign a receipt for each paper and to put them in order themselves ; the colonials would not hear of it.¹

The next morning the eighty-five sent what Barnave rightly characterized as an " insolent " letter to the National Assembly, complaining of their reception and of Barnave, and requesting the Assembly to decide before discussing their conduct, whether or no their " decree " of May 28th was to be " accepted." The Assembly, on Barnave's motion, ordered that the papers of which they had spoken should be handed over in forty-eight hours, after which the report should be proceeded with in any case.² He seems to have made another attempt to get the papers out of them by a conciliatory letter. Probably there were no papers, as the eighty-five never produced any.³ The report was read on October 11th and 12th, being too long for one sitting.

The Committee had a complicated situation to deal with and it was obvious that while punishing the rebellious they must encourage the loyal. They had decided that the General Assembly of St. Marc must be dissolved and all its acts declared null, " the most rigorous act of repression which took place under the Constituent Assembly," says Barnave.⁴ The measure was certain to be extremely unpopular with the planters and

¹ Barnave on 5 April 1791, *Le Hodey*, 23, supp., pp. 38-9 ; Barnave's report of 11 and 12 Oct., p. 23. The conference was after their appearance at the bar on 2 Oct. (see Barnave on 5 March and 5 April 1791 ; *Le Hodey* 22, p. 245, and 23, supp., p. 38), and before the decree of 4 Oct. ordering them to hand over their papers. De Pons (see last note) is wrong when he dates it on the 10th.

² *Adresse de l'Assemblée générale de la Partie française de St. Domingue à l'Assemblée Nationale*, 4 Oct. 1790. Paris, 8 pp. (*B. M. F.* 703) ; *Moniteur*, vi. 47.

³ Draft of letter, *A. N. W.* 13, 213. He says in his notes for his speech of 5 April 1791 (*A. N. W.* 13, 87) that no papers were ever produced.

⁴ *Introduction*, 120.

so far dangerous ; but it was necessary if the subordination of the colonies to France, which alone made them valuable, was to be maintained, and Barnave believed that France could count on enough loyalty in the colony to venture it. In proposing the dissolution he went counter to the planters’ wishes in a way that ought to have staggered those who represented him as their tool ; his opponents got out of the difficulty either by ignoring the fact or by calling his conduct “ vacillating.”

He knew that he was making many enemies, and in treating of the General Assembly he showed prudence as well as firmness. A mass of documents had come before the Committee ; where this was the case it was usual for the reporter to give *résumés* or to read extracts. This, he said, “ may sometimes alter the sense ; ” he therefore selected all the important papers and read every one of them ; the others he brought with him, to be read if called for. It was this reading which made the report so long. Barnave’s voice gave out and he was obliged to ask colleagues, notably the shrill-voiced Prieur, to read for him.¹ His selection of documents was so judicious, that with all their efforts his enemies never found a paper which contradicted or even modified the statements he made. The report was moderate as well as scrupulously fair, and while condemning the General Assembly as a body, the only punishment he proposed for its members, of whose faults he spoke in a manner that promised indulgence,² was that they should be kept “ in attendance on the National Assembly ” till further orders. He distributed praise as well as blame and asked for a vote of thanks to the Provincial Assembly of the North, and one of approval of the Governor and his officers, Mauduit being named.

But this was not all. The dangerous state of the colony had been frankly set forth in a letter written to the National Assembly by the Provincial Assembly of the North (June 28th)

¹ Barnave on 5 April 1791, Le Hodey, 23, supp., 39 ; *Defence, Œuvres*, ii. 397.

² *Rapport sur les affaires de St. Domingue. Fait à l’Assemblée Nationale au nom du Comité des Colonies, le 11 et 12 octobre 1790, par M. Barnave.* Paris, 103 pp. (*Procès-verbal*, xxxiii.), p. 86.

which was read on Sept. 4th ; an important document which explained in detail, in a respectful and loyal manner, how urgent it was that the National Assembly should give to its decrees an interpretation so clear that the ill-disposed and the " Amis des Noirs " could not go behind it. The colony, it was said, " will never sacrifice an indispensable prejudice with regard to the mulattoes." In time rights may be conceded, but the colony " desires to be and ought to be the only judge, the absolute mistress of means and times." As to the negroes, " the colony will never allow this kind of property . . . to be endangered, either now or in the future." If assurances on this head were not given, there would be " nothing left for the planters but to unite in a despair which only produces disastrous resolutions." ¹ The National Assembly was therefore asked to pass a constitutional decree, that no law should be made on the status of the different classes in the colonies except on the demand of the Colonial Assemblies.

Such was the warning of the defenders of France in St. Domingo. Barnave thought their demand reasonable and saw how it could be turned to good account for future improvements. But he would not ask the Assembly for an isolated constitutional law, he thought it enough to put into the preamble of the bill he proposed, this sentence : " Considering that the National Assembly has promised the colonies the speedy establishment of laws best suited to assure their prosperity ; that, in order to allay their fears it has announced beforehand . . . the firm intention of establishing as a constitutional article in their organization, that no laws on the status of persons shall be decreed for the colonies except on the precise and formal demand of their Colonial Assemblies," &c.²

This provision confirmed the initiative on their constitution promised to the colonies, designating specially the most important object on which it was to be exercised. But it did more ; it allowed them an initiative in the future, and this

¹ *Adresse*, &c. (see p. 339, note 3), pp. 9, 11. (*A. N. D.* xxv. 86.) A copy printed in Paris (*B. M. F. R.* 402) was not quite accurate.

² *Procès-verbal*, no. 439, p. 10 (vol. 33) ; *Moniteur*, vi. 107.

far from being, as Brissot supposed, a method for securing the perpetual tyranny of the whites, was all to the good. Constitutional laws, it must be remembered, could only be altered by a national Convention, and the constitution of the colonies, when once fixed, would have been incapable of alteration except by a Convention. By giving the colonials the right to propose changes in the status of persons, the Assembly left the door open to reform without frightening them. “ The advantage of this provision,” said Barnave, “ will not only consist in obliterating anxiety ; ” when once confidence is restored among the colonials, “ it will enable us to bring about easily, in concert with them, all the improvements which the economical and political existence of the colonies render reasonable and possible.”¹

Barnave called attention to this provision in his report and explained its object, yet Brissot, who entirely failed to grasp it, accused him of slipping it into the preamble, where no one would notice it.²

Barnave had further to minimize the perils of the moment and to speak of the loyalty of the planters with a confidence he was far from feeling. When reproached with this at his trial he answered, that in speaking to a people misled and far off, you do not divulge your own weakness by telling them that they wish to rebel and you fear they may succeed ; you tell them that they have never formed such an idea, and that in any case they could not carry it out.³ This feigned confidence may have helped to mislead Brissot, who knew nothing of the colonies except what the mulattoes told him and put down all he read on the other side to prejudice.

The admirable lucidity of Barnave’s report can only be appreciated by those who have struggled to unravel some of the tangled threads which form the history of St. Domingo during the Revolution.⁴ It had no sooner been read than Pétion and Grégoire appeared in the tribune, and Mirabeau

¹ *Rapport*, 97.

² *Ibid.*, 95-7 ; *Lettre à M. Barnave*, p. 8.

³ *Œuvres*, ii. 394-5.

⁴ It must be read in the original ; the *résumé* of the *Moniteur* is not clear.

asked leave to speak ; but again the Assembly refused to hear them and passed the decree by a very large majority.¹

Tranquillity was restored to St. Domingo for a short time, but the anger of the " Amis des Noirs " was deep and loud. Barnave had described them as " a Society whose existence is the terror of the inhabitants of the islands," where their works, " little known in France," circulate freely ;² and their indiscreet pens were soon busy justifying his words. Grégoire published forthwith a letter beginning :

" The 12th October must be a time for ever mournful in the annals of History ; at its periodical return liberty, humanity, and justice will wear mourning, and posterity, astonished or indignant, will remember that on this day one part of the nation was immolated to the prejudices and the cupidity of the other." Grégoire is careful to state that he is speaking, not of the slaves but of the political rights of the mulattoes. He did not attack Barnave by name, but made several accusations afterwards repeated by Brissot. His attitude to the planters may be inferred from a passage in which he speaks of " almost all " their wives, as women " whose amiability is extolled, but who cannot even mask the hideousness of vice under the show of an apocryphal modesty." ³

Brissot fell upon Barnave in the *Patriote français* and challenged him to bring a libel action. But he reserved his great guns for an open letter which he promised, remarking meanwhile that beside Chabroud's report on the Châtelet business, Barnave's seemed " the work of a schoolboy, and yet the subject was far richer. But a rich subject is only dead matter to a talent without soul." ⁴

Before the letter appeared Barnave had carried another measure likely to be unpopular with the planters and necessary to keep the colonies bound to France ; he had persuaded the Assembly to put the colonial courts under the jurisdiction of

¹ *Moniteur*, vi. 107.

² *Rapport*, 97. The *Moniteur* (vi. 107) made matters worse by making " little known " refer not to the works, but to the Society.

³ *Lettre aux Philanthropes, par M. Grégoire, curé d'Emberménil, Député du Département de la Meurthe*. Paris, Oct. 1790 (21 pp.), pp. 1, 3, 19, note.

⁴ *Patriote français*, 13 Oct., pp. 2.

the Court of Cassation.¹ A fortnight later, in pursuance of his policy, he defended the Provincial Assembly of the North when it was attacked in the Assembly, and procured a vote of thanks to a deputation which it had sent to Paris. He also presented this deputation to the Jacobins, to the scandal of Brissot who could see no difference between them and the eighty-five.²

There is no need to enter into details about Martinique or the other less perturbed colonies, where the problem was the same as in St. Domingo, but simpler. Neither is it necessary to refute all the charges that have been brought against Barnave from time to time by writers on the colonial question. They are best refuted by a knowledge of his conduct and character.

NOTE ON BARNAVE AND THE CLUB MASSIAC

Barnave's papers in the Archives Nationales might seem to show a connexion between him and this Club in contradiction to its *Procès-verbal*. They are in four boxes, W. 12, 13, 14, and 15 (besides the dossier of the Revolutionary Tribunal, W. 298). In W. 12 and 13 are just such papers on the colonies as one would expect to find, including many notes for and drafts of his reports, and of the Colonial Constitution that he drew up. W. 14 is entirely filled with papers on the colonies, most of them such as one would not expect to find. They comprise certified copies of decrees and *procès-verbaux* of the Colonial Assemblies, of which he would hardly have needed duplicates, since he would naturally use the copies belonging to the Colonial Committee; two copies of the rules of the Club Massiac; various letters addressed to the Club by the minister La Luzerne and others; a number of letters, also addressed to the Club, about the disasters of 1791. None of

¹ 11 Nov., *Moniteur*, vi. 347.

² 25 Nov., *Moniteur*, vi. 473; *Patriote français*, 23 Nov., p. 3. The Club Massiac was inclined to side with the eighty-five and did not meet from 8 Oct. to 23 Nov. 1790, on the ground that the General Assembly of St. Domingo was in Paris, and that the Society would not appear to divide the colony by setting up anything in the nature of a counter authority.

these letters are about anything with which Barnave was immediately concerned. His handwriting, so far as I could see, occurs nowhere in the box. Further, W. 14 (with W. 15) contains a certified copy of the *Procès-verbal* of the Club, from its beginning to the end of 1791; a very large and voluminous document, by far the largest and most noticeable document among Barnave's papers. It could not fail to attract the attention of any one who looks at them, yet it is not mentioned in a fairly careful inventory of the papers made at Grenoble before they were sealed up (W. 298, no. 23), nor in some additions to this inventory made when they were opened in Paris (W. 298, no. 32).

On the other hand, the correspondence of the Club Massiac (seized with the Society's papers in Feb. 1793),¹ which has been arranged in chronological order, contains in D. xxv, 86, 87, and 88, a number of letters, chiefly trivial, addressed to Barnave by various persons. Most of them are about the colonies, but of these few can have been of interest to the Club Massiac; some have nothing to do with the colonies; one is a note from a member of the Lameth family, written in agitation when Charles had set out to fight a duel. D. xxv, 88, contains a rough copy of Barnave's Colonial Constitution, some of it in his hand, and *we know from the Procès-verbal that the Club Massiac did not possess one.*²

How can the mystery be explained? I suggest that when Barnave was brought to Paris for trial, Fouquier-Tinville searched the papers of the Club Massiac in hopes of finding something there to inculcate him, that the papers were mixed, and that some were returned to the wrong receptacles.

¹ Deschamps, 55.

² See below, Chap. XXIV.

CHAPTER XX

“BARNAVE MUST BE DISCREDITED”

BRISSOT DE WARVILLE,¹ Barnave's relentless enemy, who was born in 1754, was the son of a tradesman of Chartres. He received a good education, and after about three years in a procureur's office in Paris resolved to devote himself to study and literature, a career which naturally led him to journalism, as he had to earn his living. His abilities were exceptional, he had a gift for diffuse and facile writing, unflagging industry and a great zeal for liberty and enlightenment; but though his reading was encyclopaedic it was superficial and he never attained to any idea of what knowledge means. At the age of twenty-seven he wrote and published a book on *The Theory of Criminal Law* and busied himself simultaneously with what he calls another “immense work” on *Universal Pyrrhonism*,² for he belonged to the class of authors who read one book on a subject and proceed to write another. While still young he joined the Paris Bar; but he could endure neither the four years' probation required, nor the lectures he was expected to attend, nor the very natural prejudice which his publication of a law book excited, nor even the gown he had to wear—“it seemed to me ridiculous to dress up like Scaramouch in order to defend the oppressed.”³ So he soon threw up the law and resumed his literary and journalistic activities. They introduced him into undesirable company, from which he by no means shrank; he associated with men of bad character and hazy probity, he led at one time the life of a libertine. He was rescued from this degradation by falling in love with an estimable young lady, whom he afterwards married. But even after his reform his work threw him among a gang of disreputable journalists and blackmailing

¹ His father had property at Ouarville; Brissot spelt it with a ‘w’ to show that he knew English.

² *Mémoires*, édition Perroud, i. 120:

³ *Ibid.*, i. 194.

pamphleteers, and he continued to frequent them when he had become aware of their true character. So much is clear from his autobiography, for we are taking this sketch of his life from his own pen alone. He settled in London and tried to found a "Lycée," a meeting-place and corresponding centre for the savants of all nations, of which he, Brissot, a foreigner without influence and totally ignorant of true science, was to be the director. The few men of letters with whom he was acquainted in London refused to support the scheme,¹ nevertheless he persisted, embarked his own and other people's money in it, and imagined that he failed only because he was summoned away to a short imprisonment in the Bastille for a pamphlet he had not written. He afterwards visited America, returned to France at the Revolution, set up his paper, *le Patriote français*, made no secret of his desire for a republican form of government, and became an active member of the municipal 'Comité des Recherches.'

Was it any wonder, after such a life, that though he was incapable of pecuniary dishonesty or mercenary writing, accusations of both should have clung about him?² Brissot accounted for his past by attributing to himself a child-like innocence which unfitted him to cope with the wicked; deceived again and again, his unsuspecting nature could never learn to think evil and carried him into every trap that was set for him. His autobiography is one of those which might well assume for their motto the lines,

"Thou only virtuous, gentle, kind.
Amid a world of hate;"

and he imposed this view of himself upon Madame Roland, a bad judge of character, and upon Pétion; but not upon his friend Dumont, who calls him "the pitiless Brissot." Yet even Brissot, when writing of himself as "Phédor," whose "taste for peace" and "wish to see all men happy" he vaunts, and of whom he says, "never has he been able to hate even his most perfidious enemies . . . He is sorry for them

¹ *Mémoires*, i. 339, 346.

² It was widely believed, without the slightest foundation, that he had acted as a police spy, for Lenoir.

and forgives them ;” even Brissot is constrained to add : “ when Phédor has a pen in his hand, it must be allowed that he is a different man.” ¹

Whatever were Brissot’s faults, his character in later life was greatly respected by personal friends, and it would be ungenerous to bring up his early years against him were it not necessary to explain the impression he made. Brissot set himself up as an immaculate and infallible teacher of mankind, a function which is incompatible either with incurable gullibility or with a questionable and unrepented past. His contemporaries had not read his autobiography and knew nothing of his tears and his sorrow. They did know the outside story of his life, and his pretensions, and drew natural though often incorrect inferences. They knew that he was a journalist who pursued his enemies with peculiar venom, and that he was in the habit of claiming proudly that he had spent his whole life in doing good. Remembering this, one can understand Barnave’s severe judgement : “ hypocrite of philosophy, as others are of religion.” ²

Brissot’s *Lettre à M. Barnave*, dated November 20th, fills 104 pages of tiny print : “ You criticize in a volume and you praise in monosyllables,” said Camille Desmoulins.³ Brissot always considered this letter one of his best works ; it was certainly one of his most successful, and furnished a model for attacks which were disastrous to Barnave in his lifetime and have set the tone for most historians ever since. Thus Michelet’s idea of Barnave as vain, presumptuous and intriguing is pure Brissot.

We have read the motto which Brissot prefixed to the pamphlet ; he proclaimed the doctrine of “ no idols ” in his preface, and started with the statement that the disturbances in the colonies were all due to the March decrees, and that Barnave alone was guilty, since he saw all the documents and misled the confiding Assembly. If the system hitherto followed, said Brissot, be not changed for one based on the laws of universal justice the colonies will be lost ; and he

¹ Dumont, 356–7, the caustic description is well known ; *Mémoires*, i. 18–19.

² *Œuvres*, ii. 68.

³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 79, p. 47.

added that if they refuse to accept the new system, the mulattoes can be relied upon to enforce it. The Rights of Man, he argued, precede all constitutions, and a Constituent Assembly can only *declare* them and not *decree* them. They already applied to the mulattoes, and the Assembly cannot take them away, nor abandon the rights of this class to the mercy of any other body.¹ Why these rights do not apply to the slaves he does not explain, but as the mulattoes were slave-holders, those who took up their cause as against the whites had perforce to abandon the slaves.

It will be not only right but politic, continued Brissot, to attach the mulattoes to France by giving them votes. Proud of being the white man's equal they will try to rival him in talents and riches.² They are loyal already; moreover they are the real natives, a race increasing and destined to increase while the whites will diminish. They are the intermediaries between white and black, best fitted to regenerate the blacks gradually and to keep them in check if they revolt. What harm can result from angering the whites? Will they seek the protection of England? No, for England does not want to go to war with us; the nation admires our Revolution. (Here Brissot put a note, saying that if anything could make the English want to fight France the fault would be partly Barnave's, “for the very great part he took” in the “useless and impolitic decree about the Pacte de Famille.”) Will the whites revolt? he asked: ‘Illusory fear.’ Will the mulattoes, as some expect, massacre the whites? What! the mulattoes, martyred, humiliated for a century, massacre the brothers of their benefactors!—Further; no prejudices are indestructible, and the whites, bad as they are, will improve if we insist on it. There will never be peace in the islands till there is perfect equality between whites and mulattoes. The Revolution has passed in France without torrents of blood; why should it not so pass in the colonies? “Nature is the same everywhere; man is naturally good.”³ The “Amis des Noirs” considered themselves authorities on slavery, but their writings

¹ *Lettre à M. Barnave*, 14–15.

² *Ibid.*, 44.

³ *Ibid.*, 49–61. Quotations, pp. 50, 61.

show that they knew nothing of the way it degrades and brutalizes slaves and slave-owners alike.

We have picked out Brissot's arguments ; we will pass over his long rhapsodies and come to the main part of his pamphlet, his virulent attack on Barnave. Barnave was accused of burking discussion in the Assembly ; of causing the Assembly of St. Marc to be condemned unheard ; of suppressing documents as a reporter ; of suppressing the original address of the Provincial Assembly of the North, because it was seditious, and causing an expurgated copy to be printed ;¹ of lying, when he said that the Assembly had announced its intention of waiting to hear what the colonies had to say before deciding on the status of slaves in the colonies.² He was reproached with hearing Pétion's speech on the slave trade without being “crushed” or feeling his “powerlessness to contend with such an athlete ;” with his hatred of philosophy ; with only replying to the arguments of philosophers and politicians by a “disdainful silence” or by fresh decrees ; with displaying his “thoughtless youth, drunk with vanity.” ‘You were young and you were ignorant,’ said Brissot ; ‘you fell an easy dupe to the planters’ wiles ; books might have enlightened you and I sent you plenty, but “time, courage, goodwill, talent, were needed to plunge” into that “boundless ocean,” and you lacked all these.’³

Finally Brissot drew a picture of the true patriot, as a means, he said, of “unmasking the sycophants, who under cover of the title . . . acquire a great popularity, to make themselves formidable to the Court with a view of selling it there later on.” The ‘true patriot’ abounded in all the virtues which Barnave showed no signs of possessing. He never says, “I love the people ;” he is too much one of them. He hates royalty,

¹ The copy printed in Paris (see last chapter note 1, p. 344) omits certain strong expressions of the original. But these make no difference to the tenor of the address. There seems no reason to connect Barnave with the printing.

² *Lettre*, pp. 4-12.

³ *Lettre*, pp. 26, 18, 19, 36. Pétion's speech, which he must have delivered in the Jacobins', is sensible, but does not grapple with the difficulties of the situation. He printed it ; *Discours sur la Traite des Noirs*, par M. Pétion de Villeneuve, avril 1790, 71 pp.

not as Cromwell did, but like "Cato, Hamden [sic] or Samuel Adams", because he knows that kings are "man-eaters." He is inflexible, truthful, does not care about popularity, "*never intrigues*," rejects luxury as a crime, does not give audiences to clients and receive them with "cold dignity." "He is only rude and proud with the enemies of liberty." He loves and preaches philosophy.¹ A description of the "Patriot Orator" followed, in which Brissot alluded tauntingly to Barnave's "fatal words" and annihilated his pretensions with two contrary dicta: (a) The true patriot, "sure of his own soul . . . abandons himself to the inspiration of his theme, especially in great causes. . . . To study words then is to proclaim a coldness of the soul, an emptiness of ideas; it is an effort to conceal impotence under vain sounds." (b) Demosthenes never spoke impromptu on any subject.²

In this pamphlet Brissot, as was usual with him, misquotes to suit his own ends. Thus, to make Merlin's compliments to Barnave ridiculous, he garbles them and adds one that Merlin never made, on Barnave's "vast knowledge."³

The origin of the charges of rudeness and luxury is amusing. Brissot's journalist friend, Robert, a tiresome, pushing little man,⁴ had taken up the cause of some soldiers who came to Paris in May to complain of their officers, and imagining that it would be a privilege for Barnave to help them, he brought his protégés to see him one morning, by appointment. Barnave kept them waiting an hour and a half, received them as haughtily as any minister, cut them short and showed them out. Evidently he did not like the case, and he was always busy, but he does seem to have been rude on this occasion. It must have been rare with him, for when at his trial he was accused of haughtiness to the Assembly of St. Marc, he simply appealed to his known character.

Robert took his soldiers to Alexandre Lameth on the morrow, and found Barnave in the room, "stretched on a superb ottoman."⁵ This was the "luxury."

¹ *Lettre*, pp. 70-3.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 84.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁴ See Madame Roland, *Mémoires*, édition Perroud, i. 169-79.

⁵ *Mercur national*, 29 Oct. 1790, pp. 1235-6, note; Robert tells the story. Barnave, *Œuvres*, ii. 398.

Brissot could almost always goad his victims into answering, and other journalists rubbed their hands in anticipation of a fray. Barnave did sit down to draft an answer, but it turned into a defence of the right of free censure, and he abandoned it.¹ It is characteristic of Brissot that he saw no reason against dining at a party with the friends of a man whom he had accused of treachery, or even with the man himself. When the pamphlet appeared he was already engaged to dine at a restaurant with some deputies, amongst whom were Lameth, Noailles, and Mirabeau; and coming to the rendezvous late he found no one there. Lameth, he learnt, had brought Barnave, and the company, afraid of seeing him and Brissot together, had dispersed. Brissot records this as an instance of the cowardice of the false friends of liberty, who were afraid of compromising themselves by associating with its fearless champion.²

After a new report by Barnave on the troubles in Martinique, on November 29th, Brissot published fresh criticisms in the *Patriote français* and reprinted them as a pamphlet.³ How would Barnave reply to these new accusations, he asked, “by silence, or by secret mischief-making?” Barnave replied by silence, and Brissot continued his running fire in the *Patriote*. Gorsas, who had been an admirer of Barnave’s, began ere long to follow Brissot’s example in his *Courrier de Paris*.

Brissot was a free lance, but he opened the way for mercenaries who would have had no chance of succeeding if a patriot so undoubted had not been fighting on the same side. Barnave was one of the bulwarks of the National Assembly, and the deliberately planned attempt to destroy his influence which was now made was part of a policy of breaking the power and prestige of the Assembly by bringing it into contempt. The policy was Mirabeau’s. The Court party had already made efforts in this direction, but Mirabeau substituted a system

¹ *A. N. W.* 13. 316.

² Brissot, *Mémoires*, ii. 22. Cf. the duc de Chartres’s diary, 117–8 (*Correspondance de L. P. J. d’Orléans*, ii). The dinner, at Velloni’s in the place des Victoires, was at 9 francs a head.

³ *Patriote français*, 7 Dec., and *Réflexions sur le nouveau Décret rendu pour la Martinique et les Colonies le 29 nov. 1790*. Imp. du *Patriote français*, 16 pp.

for the mere impulses of hatred.¹ His tactics are well known ; the Assembly was to be induced to pass bad decrees ; popular measures were to be proposed by unpopular deputies ; useless debates were to be prolonged, so that every one might say : “ Look what a time they take over their interminable work ! ”² These were Mirabeau’s own words, used when he was denouncing the enemies of the Revolution for cunning practices which, with incredible perfidy, he himself recommended to the Court shortly after. The discrediting of Barnave entered almost necessarily into the general scheme. He was a popular “ idol,” and violent patriot journalists who had long been given to girding at the bulk of the Assembly as lukewarm and corrupt, found an honourable exception in him and his party. The Court journalists sought to inspire confidence by repeating the complaints of the patriots ; they joined to them accusations against Barnave which, under the shelter of Brissot’s authority, they could now make without exciting suspicion ; and hoped that soon no idols would be left standing for any one to worship. The plan was, to some extent, fruitful ; the Assembly lost ground in public opinion, and this must be counted among the reasons why the Revolution which bade fair to end peacefully in 1790 belied that promise in 1791.

Barnave comments on the campaign against him as follows :

“ Perhaps those who were very zealous in preventing the abolition of the monarchy and the total dissolution of the Government ought to have wished the men who shared my opinions to be supported ; but they did not see things with this noble impartiality, our successes excited their hatred and they flattered themselves that when they had overthrown us no formidable enemy would be left. They adopted a policy which all who have seen the Revolution close at hand will certainly regard as one of the principal causes of the events which followed. They joined their cause with that of the men who were even then working for the overthrow of the monarchy. They were found praising and supporting the Republicans.”³

Speaking of this time in his defence, he said : “ Then

¹ See his note for the Court of 23 Dec. 1790, Lamarck, ii. 421, 433-67.

² Mirabeau on 6 Nov. 1790, *Moniteur*, vi. 312.

³ *Introduction*, 124.

Mirabeau introduced himself into the Jacobins', announcing boldly that his intention was to ruin me ; then a well-known journal, called *L'Ami des Patriotes*, was written ; a journal distributed with costly profusion, sent to people who would neither take it in nor read it ; a journal which kept itself going for a long time without subscribers, and which poured calumny periodically over the sincerest friends of our country."¹

The authorship of this weekly journal was for some time a secret. It was attributed to a friend of Lafayette's, and Barnave imagined Lafayette to be responsible, as an indignant note among his papers shows.² Siéyes was also supposed by some to have a hand in it, and the records of his admirer, Œlsner, show that the way in which he spoke of Barnave and his friends was much like that of the paper.³

But neither Lafayette nor Siéyes were concerned, and the real author, as afterwards appeared, was the deputy, A. C. Duquesnoy, who wrote it for Montmorin. The minister began to be inspired by Mirabeau a few weeks after it was started, and the journal is especially interesting as representing the policy of the Court, under their direction. Early in December Montmorin, when expounding his ideas to Mirabeau, said of the extreme Left : the Lameths " are irreconcilable, because they are convinced that it is impossible they should be forgiven. A single one of their sect merits some exception ; this is Barnave. We must win him over in order to take him away from them, or else ruin him with them ; I should prefer the first alternative to the second." So the *Ami des Patriotes* was " at first paid to tear Messrs. Barnave and Lameth to pieces regularly every week," as Brissot says.⁴

Duquesnoy, called contemptuously " the ministers' lackey " by Barnave, was used and despised by Mirabeau, who found him well established with Montmorin,⁵ who had taken him over from the Archbishop of Bordeaux. He was an able writer who could assume a patriotic tone, attack with skill

¹ *Œuvres*, ii. 366.

² *A. N. W.* 13. 222.

³ *Feuille du Jour*, 23 Dec. 181. Œlsner, author of the *Bruchstücke*, was a German Jacobin.

⁴ Lamarck, ii. 390-1 ; *Patriote français*, 7 Aug. 1791, p. 156.

⁵ *Œuvres*, ii. 326 ; Lamarck, iii. 78.

and persistence, and sit plausibly upon the fence for any length of time. His first number came out on November 27th, and the campaign began carefully with a display of impartiality. Gradually the Assembly was belittled in the most insidious fashion, the Jacobin leaders were “written down” as “factionous” and provokers of disorder and riot, every disturbance being attributed to their machinations; and after a while Robespierre and Pétion were “written up” as extreme, but refreshingly honest. The partisans of Robespierre regard these praises as an unwilling tribute to the virtues of the “Incorruptible” wrung from his foes; in reality they were part of a manoeuvre to destroy Barnave by raising up a rival considered too impractical to be dangerous.

Duquesnoy’s personal attacks on Barnave were founded on Brissot, the famous letter was said to have crushed Barnave, whose influence was now a thing of the past, and compliments were paid to Brissot’s patriotic wisdom. Duquesnoy had always detested Barnave, and had, by the way, begun to say that Barnave’s influence was over, on May 23rd, 1789.¹ He now borrowed Brissot’s cries of “ignorance” and “presumption”; “this child,” he wrote, “has read nothing, thought over nothing; he does not know the theory of any government, ancient or modern; he knows no language; he has never travelled.” He added a contribution of his own; that Barnave had “never printed anything on any subject,” and that while he had natural talents, his reputation had been made by his friends, who had forced him into a prominence for which he was unfit because they needed him for their intrigues. This idea, pure invention as it was, took some hold upon the public, and traces of it may be found in many writings. On March 5th, Duquesnoy, when speaking of the glorious days of the oath of the tennis-court, actually had the impudence to write: “Were there any Jacobins then? And what was M. Barnave? This child, for whom intrigue has

¹ *Journal de Duquesnoy*, i. 40-1. Mirabeau and others are included with Barnave. M. Brette (*Revue critique*, 9 March, 1896, p. 363, &c.) believes that only a portion of the so-called *Journal de Duquesnoy* was written by him. But, almost throughout, the sentiments and expressions are those of the *Ami des Patriotes*.

created the reputation of a day, did not exist; he hardly foresaw his incredible celebrity.”¹ The Lameths and Duport came in for attacks only a degree less virulent. The conduct of all four friends in the Assembly was closely scrutinized, and Brissot declares that Duquesnoy paid a young man to attend the debates and pick up anecdotes unfavourable to them.² Duquesnoy, as well as Brissot, found many echoes in the press, and soon, while certain patriotic journalists were beginning to find Barnave’s dealings with the colonies suspicious, there was hardly a writer on the other side who was not ready with his sneer at the “ignorance” and “presumption” of “the child,” and with gibes at “little Barnave.”

Meanwhile the old tale of cruelty was repeated *ad nauseam*. Here are two specimens. The first is in a pamphlet, published in November, which describes how “the three Regicides”, Jacques Clément, Ravayrac, and Damien, sent to Paris by the Devil, visit the Jacobins’.³ They ask Robespierre, supposed to be Damien’s nephew, to point out the celebrities. “Your President,” says Damien, “is very young; what is he?” Robespierre answers: “He is M. Barnave, the most humane and virtuous citizen of France; he is commendable for a hundred assassinations and as many arsons, which have been committed by his orders for he does not take the trouble to work himself.” Barnave delivers a speech to the new members, addressing a butcher as, “Estimable citizen, whose hands still dyed with blood, my favourite colour, show the nobility of your profession,” and makes them swear to destroy the monarchy. After attending the Jacobins’ and the Assembly, the regicides, dreadfully shocked, return with relief to Hell.

¹ *Ami des Patriotes*, i. 89, 90, 440; cf. *Bruchstücke*, 36, on the “Intriguers” of the Jacobins: “As it is to their advantage to keep a little behind the scenes, and as they possess no distinguished talents, they have, in order to set up a champion against Mirabeau, managed to create an incredible reputation for Barnave. . . . It is a pity that the intrigue of others has pushed him forward prematurely.”

² *Patriote français*, 7 Aug. 1791, p. 157.

³ *Les trois Régicides, Jacques Clément, Ravayrac, et Damien au club des Jacobins*, de l’Imp. du Club Jacobite, l’an II de la tyrannie (55 pp.) (B. M. F. 356), p. 13–14. The reception of the duc de Chartres dates it.

The second, published in February, takes the form of a letter purporting to be written to Laclos by the executioner, Sanson, who having seen his name in a list of the Jacobins, printed between Barnave's and Charles Lameth's, is afraid they will think that he wishes to rival them, and deprecates the anger of his “great masters.”¹

About March another calumny, which had long circulated by word of mouth, found its way into print. Barnave showed no signs of being flush of money; if he received bribes what did he do with them? He “goes several times a week to a game of Biribi set up in the Hanover pavilion on the Boulevard du Temple, where he passes the night. At one of the last sittings he lost a hundred thousand livres.”² We do not need Barnave's assurance to feel certain that he was no gambler, but he gave it at his trial: “It has been said that I played, and lost large sums, and I deny having played any game except a few games of billiards, at which the greatest stake was the price of a dinner.”³ The friends continued to let attacks from every quarter pass in silence.

Next to Mirabeau, whose life laid him peculiarly open to libels, and possibly to Lafayette and Bailly, Barnave and the Lameths suffered most from them; but all the Left were under a daily fire. “Alone among the authorities who have governed France before and since the Revolution,” the Constituent Assembly “allowed freedom of the press, frankly and sincerely,” says Madame de Staël. “. . . A hundred times I have seen how the most mordant insults on the members of the majority, their friends and their principles, were being sold at the doors of an Assembly more powerful than any King of France has ever been.”⁴

Here, as in so many cases, the attitude of Barnave represents that of the Assembly. He and his friends stood as champions of freedom whenever the outrageous licence of the press, which all thoughtful men deplored, had roused the alarm or

¹ *Réclamation de M. Sanson*, 11 Feb. 1791; Aulard, *Jacobins*, ii. 83.

² *Grand plan pour préparer les émeutes* (n. p., n. d.), 7 pp., p. 7, note (B. M. R. 204). This is the earliest mention I have found, but there may be earlier ones.

³ *Œuvres*, ii. 389.

⁴ De Staël, *Considérations*, i. 289, 294.

anger of their colleagues. Alexandre spoke eloquently when Camille Desmoulins was denounced to the Assembly; Charles, in the Jacobins', took up the cudgels for the hated Marat, of whom, as he observed, he had every cause to complain,¹ and when, on Jan. 18th, Malouet, who had the subject much at heart, demanded a press law (as he often did), Barnave answered him. Any law on the freedom of the press, he said, ought, in his opinion, to be postponed; for “though every one is persuaded that private calumnies ought to be repressed,” every one is growing daily more convinced that “the greatest latitude possible” ought to be allowed where public men and things are concerned.

“In fine, by the course of events, I know not how directed, it happens that nowadays calumny is almost exclusively aimed at the persons who care most for liberty. And as I like to believe that these persons always care more for the public welfare than for themselves, therefore, in spite of the disagreeables, in spite of the many clouds—necessarily passing ones—which the freedom of the press may draw down on them, I hope that in the end, some of us led by interest and others by truth, we shall all agree upon this great maxim: that it must be permissible to say everything, to write everything, to print everything concerning public men; because the man who accepts the dignified office, the honourable but delicate office of managing the affairs of the public, voluntarily exposes himself to the censure of his fellow citizens, from that day forward.

“There is no comparison between the evils to the public welfare which would result from the slightest constraint on the freedom of this censure, and the evils which may result to individuals from calumnies which are best repelled by that publicity of action and opinion, which is at once the safeguard of liberty for the nation and the safeguard of men's reputations.”²

“It is noble . . . to praise the very weapons with which one has been wounded,” as even Brissot grudgingly observed.³

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 38, p. 662-3 and no. 63, p. 482-3. ² Le Hodey, 20, p. 188-9. Stenographic report.

³ *Patriote français*, 20 Jan. 1791, p. 77.

CHAPTER XXI

TWO MONTHS' MISTAKES

It had become clear that the colonies were not likely, for the present, to lay aside their internal dissensions in order to express their wishes about their Constitution. "Everything shows that the colonies are not enlightened enough," said Barnave, and on November 29th he proposed to help them by sending them a model of what they were to do, in the shape of an "Instruction" containing "a real organization."¹ His bill passed, and the Colonial Committee set to work upon a provisional Colonial Constitution, which he hoped would serve as a means of introducing reforms insensibly.

What followed must be told in his own words; he has just been speaking of the campaign against him.

"In a large Assembly courage and frankness have so much advantage over all these methods, and I had already resisted so many libels with no other defence than a great punctuality in attending to my duties in the Assembly, that had I been able to continue attending to them just then, I have no doubt but that I should have baffled this systematic attempt completely, skilfully combined and ardently pursued though it was.

"Unfortunately I found myself seriously occupied in the Committees, and I could give but little time to the public sittings. Several of my friends were in the same case. Thus, while one was drawing up the plan of military promotion, while another was preparing the institution of the juries, and while I myself was busy with the immense work which has since been presented to the Assembly by M. Fermont,² we were attacked by libels, different in spirit but very well com-

¹ *Moniteur*, vi. 502-4. The occasion was his report on Martinique, and he proposed other measures as well.

² Barnave's papers contain a mass of notes for these Instructions, and corrected drafts of them.

bined for our destruction. Some treated us as fanatics, the others as monarchists, and they profited in a cowardly way by the silence in which the interest of the country, and that alone, was keeping us.

“ When after a rather long interval I was able to resume my duties with my customary exactness, I found that this system of detraction, favoured by my absence, had made more progress than I could have believed possible ; the confidence which I enjoyed in the Assembly was weakened, and my popularity outside had declined very sensibly. No doubt my best plan would have been to appear not to see this, and to follow my line without troubling myself about it ; this course was not only firmer and nobler, it also offered the surest means of winning back in a short time what I had lost. It would have been the course I should have followed if this kind of reverse, entirely new to me then, had allowed me to reflect quite coolly on the conduct I ought to adopt. Perhaps those who have taken part in public business, and have known from experience not only all the charms of popularity, but all the means it gives one of doing good, will excuse me for having made some sacrifices to it just then, especially when they remember how energetically I afterwards resisted. This time of my public life is the only one when I was not perfectly myself. One mistake led me into another. I opposed the departure of Mesdames ; I let myself go in a violent denunciation of the Club monarchique ; I took a part, very subordinate, —but still I did take some part, in that unhappy affair of the priests’ oath. By an unfortunate sequence, which was either the natural effect of violent opinions on the spirit of the people, or was perhaps the work of those who seized upon each of my mistakes in order to make me odious, some of these vehement motions of mine were immediately followed by popular movements. With the same frankness which I use in confessing my errors, I can assert that not only had I no part in these movements, but that they even served better than anything else to make me perceive the wrong road I had taken. I wanted to parry the effects of calumny, and my conduct was giving it some reality.

“ If the sad success of these methods had not warned me

to change them, I should have been led to do so by the uneasiness in which they kept me. I soon returned, therefore, to the line I had quitted, but it took some time to destroy the impression my conduct had created." ¹

Few traces of his absence from the Assembly or loss of popularity can now be found. He did not speak often in December, and on the 21st and 22nd he was beaten for the presidency by d'André.² In January he became active again. His violence seems to have been entirely confined to the three subjects he mentions, and we will take them in chronological order.³

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy, accepted by the King sorely against his will and in spite of the Pope's disapproval, had remained a dead letter. The King's advisers, who hoped that the Pope might be persuaded to give it a certain sanction,⁴ entered into negotiations with Rome, and while these negotiations were proceeding some of the higher Clergy used the dislike of the faithful for the new laws, to stir up strife in a manner which excited the disapproval of all parties in the Assembly. It became necessary to put a stop to these manœuvres, and on November 27th a bill was passed which placed all ecclesiastical functionaries under the necessity of taking the civic oath, upon pain of losing their offices. Members of the National Assembly who held ecclesiastical offices were ordered to take the oath within eight days of the sanction of the decree; to others longer delays were granted. Clerics, who either resisted the decrees of the Assembly in future, or continued to exercise their public functions while refusing to take the oath, or exercised such functions after they had been

¹ *Introduction*, 124-7.

² *Patriote français*, 22 Dec.

³ Duquesnoy (*Ami des Patriotes*, i. 361-2), who says that on 8 Feb. Barnave, owning that he dared not vote with Maury, did not vote against an adjournment of the question of free culture of tobacco, in the *appel nominal* on that point, comments on his "shameful cowardice." As Barnave, on 16 Nov., had spoken against taking off the tax until means had been found to replace it, this might seem like a sacrifice to popularity. But the real reason for granting free culture was that it had become necessary if Alsace was to be quieted (see Muguet's report, *Moniteur*, vii. 363, and Gower, p. 61). This puts a different complexion on the matter.

⁴ Sorel, ii. 122, &c.

suppressed, were to lose their pay and to be deprived of political rights.¹ They were of course free to continue their functions without pay or public office, like members of non-established churches, and non-jurors who did not disobey the laws were entitled to a pension. (A vote secured this retiring pension to the Curés on Feb. 8th, the Bishops were held to be entitled to it already.²) The law was severe and impolitic, even with this alleviation; but it had been provoked by the culpable methods of the Clergy, in league with other malcontents, and while we deplore the blindness of the Assembly to conscientious scruples, we must remember that the Clergy had made it hard to distinguish genuine scruples from political manœuvres.

Barnave supported the bill, saying: "I think that humanity and prudence ought to make us hasten to take measures, by means of which we shall avoid the severer punishments which would be repugnant to our minds."

Mirabeau, who had apparently embarked on his policy of egging on the Assembly to make bad laws, appealed to passion in an eloquent and violently anti-clerical speech (written for him by Lamourette), and brought forward a bill, of which some of the provisions were so inquisitorial that Pétion protested.³

The decree was not constitutional and the King was at liberty to refuse his sanction if he dared; he delayed giving it and addressed a last appeal to Rome.⁴ The Assembly would have been wise to await the result of the negotiations which were known to be in progress. But here lay the crux of the matter; the leaders, convinced that they were within their rights and resenting outside interference, were determined not to recognize an appeal to Rome.⁵ As Barnave put it: "Temporal arrangements are entirely within our province, and no foreign Power has the right to co-operate in sanctioning

¹ *Moniteur*, vi. 496, 498.

² *Ibid.*, vii. 332. Gorsas (xxi. 127-8) says that Voidel's appeal to settle the matter at once had support from all sides.

³ *Moniteur*, vi. 486, 512, 492. Barnave spoke 26 Nov.

⁴ Sorel, ii. 128.

⁵ See letter of the Archbishop of Aix to the King; *Armoire de fer, Troisième Recueil*, i. 148.

the acts which determine them." Therefore, on December 23rd, on the motion of Camus, the President was sent to the King to ask for an immediate sanction.¹

The King returned an evasive answer, about the measures which he was taking to execute the Civil Constitution without disturbing the peace of the realm; and no sooner had it been read than Camus, interpreting its real meaning, sounded a trumpet-call against the encroachments of Rome. "The Bishops", he cried, "declare that they are waiting for the sanction of him whom they call the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church—as if there were any other than her founder, Jesus Christ!" . . . "For three hundred years we have been fighting against an ultramontane." Louis' answer had not been countersigned by a minister, and this brought up constitutional difficulties which were cleverly treated by Maury, who endeavoured to obtain a delay but was too provocative to do his side much good. Barnave answered him, and jealous as usual for the authority of the Assembly, asked whether the rights of the Constituent Body to offer its decrees for acceptance, and not for sanction, did not extend to acts necessary to carry those decrees into execution. The upshot of the debate was that instructions were given to the President to beg the King for an answer in legal form.² Thus pressed, Louis surrendered, and sent a letter *accepting* and not *sanctioning* the decree, whereby he threw the responsibility on the Assembly.³ A number of ecclesiastics, with Grégoire at their head, took the oath at once.

Thus far Barnave had only supported the measures of others and he never regretted this part of his conduct. His mistakes began on Jan. 3rd.

The week's grace for clerical deputies expired on the 2nd, and they must now take the oath or forfeit their ecclesiastical offices. Gobel, Bishop of Lydda, and four curés took it forthwith, but the Bishop of Clermont, who was rudely interrupted by Treillard and others, made a protest on the ground of religious scruples, and finally refused to swear without restrictions. He did more, for he printed the formula of an oath

¹ 23 Dec., *Moniteur*, vi. 705, 714 (Barnave).

² 23 Dec., *Moniteur*, vi. 711-5.

³ 26 Dec., *Moniteur*, vi. 730.

which he had intended to propose, containing the reservation: "excepting formally such matters as depend essentially on the spiritual power."¹ Reservations were not to the taste of the majority, and when the attention of the Assembly was called to this document on the 3rd, Charles Lameth remarked that it would be a good thing to let the ecclesiastics know, that if they had not taken their oath by to-morrow their places would be considered vacant. Upon this the Bishop of Clermont quietly defied the Assembly, and saying that it was a mistake to punish a man for refusing to swear what was against his conscience, declared that he had not resigned his office, did not intend to do so, and should never consider himself as dispossessed. The Left could not or would not understand the point of the ecclesiastic's difficulty—the impossibility of quitting, without the order of the Church, a post in which the Church had placed him—and Barnave, saying that there was no question here of a forced oath, but of an oath attached to certain functions, moved 'that the ecclesiastical members be notified that the delay for taking the oath expires to-morrow at one o'clock.' Cazalès pleaded for further delay in words worthy of the best traditions of the Assembly. He is the hero of these debates, in which a wisdom that he did not always show, coupled with his usual sincerity and loyalty, makes him shine pre-eminent. He pleaded in vain; the moderate Dèmeunier, appealing to the Bishop to resign his office for the sake of peace, supported Barnave, and the motion passed. Charles Lameth made himself obnoxious during the discussion. He was always inclined to be aggressive, and as soon as Barnave went astray he was perpetually upon the war-path. He interrupted Cazalès; he demanded that he should be called to order for using an expression disrespectful to the Assembly, because Cazalès had begged his colleagues only to command the Clergy to do what was "feasible." The President, d'André, refused to call Cazalès to order, and when Charles gave him a lecture, replied with a sarcasm on "the despotism of thirty or forty members." Lameth insisted on his motion being put to the vote, and Barnave

¹ *Moniteur*, vii. 20-1; *Serment civique, proposé par M. l'évêque de Clermont, le dimanche 2 janvier*, 1 p. (B. M. F. R. 161).

voted with his friends against passing to the order of the day over it. They were defeated, as they deserved to be.¹

At two o'clock on the 4th, Grégoire, who when taking the oath himself had already tried to reassure his brethren by stating solemnly that the Assembly had never intended to touch "dogma, the hierarchy, the spiritual authority of the Head of the Church,"² made a further appeal to them. The Assembly, he told them, was only demanding an oath to obey the law, an oath which could be taken without implying private approval of the law; and Mirabeau joined in with an emphatic statement of the fact that all were perfectly free to refuse the oath and to lose their places. After this kind of explanation had been given, Barnave observed that it was time to put the law into execution, and moved: first, that the President should call upon the ecclesiastical functionaries who were members to take the oath; secondly, that if they refused,—and he hoped this would not be the case,—the King should be asked to give orders for the filling of their vacant places by election. The measure was violent, but his words were not so. "I fear that as long as the Assembly has not spoken there will be doubt as to the execution of the law and variations in the way in which it is executed; and that an increasing resistance will afflict patriotism and disturb the public peace."³ Thouret in supporting him, when the Right were trying to ride off on a side issue, used much stronger language, saying that "all these delays" were "only the astute methods which anti-civism employed to withdraw itself from the empire of the law."⁴

The first part of Barnave's motion was decreed, and the President began to call upon the Clergy by name. The scene has often been described. There had been a curious bungle in the copies of the new law which had been posted up, by which the law was given such a title as made it appear that priests who refused to take the oath were to be prosecuted as disturbers of the peace,⁵ and in consequence a small but noisy

¹ *Moniteur*, vii. 29-31; *Ami des Patriotes*, i. 170, note.

² 27 Dec., *Moniteur*, vi. 738.

³ *Moniteur*, vii. 38-9.

⁴ *Point du Jour*, xviii. 38.

⁵ See *Moniteur*, vii. 45, for the explanation of this bungle.

crowd outside the Manège was shouting threats against the Clergy. The Bishop of Agen refused to swear; two curés refused; the President cut short their explanations, and Foucauld talked of martyrs forbidden to testify to their faith. The situation was intolerable, and it was not much better after the adoption of de Bonnay's well-meant suggestion, that the ecclesiastics should not be called over, but asked to present themselves in the tribune if they wished to take the oath. Three or four curés came up, but they persisted in making restrictions; a quarter of an hour passed in silence, at the end of it the aged Bishop of Poitiers declared that he would not dishonour his grey hairs by compliance. Cazalès proposed that the Assembly should allow the Bishop of Clermont's formula to be used, but Mirabeau, once more insisting that spiritual matters had not been touched, moved for the adoption of the second part of Barnave's motion. It passed by a large majority and the deputies separated quietly; the non-juring ecclesiastics met with no rudeness outside, for the crowd had soon been hushed.¹ Mirabeau wrote to Lamarck: "If the Assembly thinks that the resignation of twenty thousand curés will have no effect on the kingdom, it has strange spectacles," and he opined that it was "spitted," as he had hoped.²

Barnave's next appearance was in the way of peace. In order to avoid heated and fruitless discussions, he persuaded the Assembly to pass to the order of the day over some letters which the President had received from clerics (deputies and others), who had taken the oath and wished to retract it. On his motion it was also announced that no letters of the kind would be received in future.³

Mirabeau, having helped the Assembly to "spit itself," now tacked, and in one of his better moments proposed a measure which, by extending the conditions required for eligibility in Bishops, made the Civil Constitution easier to

¹ *Moniteur*, vii. 39-40, 43-4; *Lendemain*, 7 Jan., p. 62. This paper says that some of the extreme Left pressed Barnave to give a longer delay and that he refused.

² Lamarck, ii. 365-6 (5 Jan.).

³ 6 Jan., *Moniteur*, vii. 55; *Feuille du Jour*, 7 Jan., p. 50.

work.¹ But a week later he was back on the old tack, and in a proclamation which he (or rather Lamourette) drew up for the Ecclesiastical Committee, he threatened the Clergy that if they did not conform, the French would adopt Deism as a religion, and was so offensive to Catholicism in France that Camus stopped the reading of such "abominations" in high indignation.² The atmosphere was still heated, but the Left began to be aware that they had pushed the Clergy too hard, and a Proclamation was adopted, written by Chasset, in which it was explained that non-jurors might continue in office until they were replaced. Nevertheless further steps were taken to ensure the execution of the law, and over one of these Barnave made his most violent speech, in which he characterized the resistance of the Clergy as what, in the minds of those who engineered and exploited it, it undoubtedly was : part of a general scheme to ruin the Revolution.

On the evening of Jan. 25th, Chasset reported for the Ecclesiastical and Constitutional Committees on some difficulties which had arisen at Amiens in connexion with the replacement of certain non-juring clergy. The Right punctuated the report with noise and scornful laughter, and Maury larded his speech against the Committees' bill with gibes. Tension was high when Barnave mounted the tribune to reply to Maury ; he had prepared a speech in which he entered into the rights of the State over a State-established Church,³ but he did not use these arguments and he threw prudence to the winds. He dismissed the point at issue in a few words ; what really mattered, he said, was "that from one end of the kingdom to the other a small band of factious men, who regret their privileges, their property"—here his voice was drowned in applause and murmurs, and Foucauld shouted : "You can only talk nonsense !" ⁴

Barnave continued : "When they talk to us here of the distinction between the temporal power and the spiritual

¹ 7 Jan., *Moniteur*, vii. 62-4 ; Barnave proposed two uncontroversial amendments.

² 14 Jan., *Moniteur*, vii. 130-2, 135-8.

³ *A. N. W.* 13. 51, notes for it.

⁴ *Moniteur*, vii. 226. The speech from Le Hodey's stenographic report.

power, they are not in earnest ; it is the temporality of ecclesiastical property that they mean. This is not the only question over which they have tried to turn the emotions which are most easily roused in the public mind, against the founders of liberty, against this Constitution, made for the prosperity of the Empire and the happiness of the people. All the ideas which men hold sacred have been used ; the word 'monarchy,' so dear to Frenchmen—(cries of Yes ! Yes ! on the Right, applause on the Left). And has it not been invoked every time that you have passed decrees against some tyrannous usurpation ? The word 'property,' which is one of the bases of human society—has not that been invoked every time that you have passed decrees against the various encroachments which had reduced the public revenue to nothing, for the sake of increasing private revenues ?

"Do not be surprised, therefore, if they attempt to arm themselves against you with the sacred name of Religion, now that you have destroyed the abuses which profaned it ; now that by making its ministers more equal, you have rescued some from the poverty which humiliated them, and others from the opulence which too often made them an object of scandal. (Great applause.) . . . It is time at last to declare ourselves in a manner that will put an end to this state of dissensions, of troubles, of civil wars,—into which they shall not lead us,—into which it is only too evident that they would like to lead us. (Applause from the Left.)"

After a digression to the Club monarchique, to which we shall return, he went on to say that there was no question here of "simple or feeble pastors," evidently led astray ; "we must begin by removing and replacing all the Bishops from one end of the kingdom to the other ;" and he moved that measures for filling their places should be taken at once.¹

Here ended his part in the Civil Constitution ; it was, as he says, very subordinate. He did not speak on the 26th, when further measures were voted in consequence of his motion. Mirabeau was in difficulties that day ; Cazalès, again pleading for delay, was representing the perils of a schism and a civil war, and Maury, who tried to stop him, cried exultantly :

¹ Le Hodey, xx. 343-5.

"Let them pass this decree ; we want it. Two or three more like this and we shall have done with them !" It was exactly what Mirabeau was aiming at, and he passed off his uneasiness at hearing his plans thus discovered by sneering at Cazalès for being always in a minority, and insinuating that he wished for a religious war. "My wishes are very sincere," cried the honest Cazalès, and the treacherous Mirabeau had to retract.¹ The non-jurors' places were filled, and the Civil Constitution, harmful though it was to the Revolution, did not bring about all that Mirabeau and Maury hoped and Cazalès feared.

The Jacobins took a part which was pacific, if irritating to dissentients. On Jan. 9th they sent a circular to the affiliated Societies, drawn up by d'Aiguillon, exhorting them to preach tolerance and above all to give the Clergy no opportunity of becoming martyrs. When the vacant bishoprics were filled they interested themselves in the elections, and five of the new Bishops came to the Club to return thanks for the help its influence had afforded them. It was hardly edifying, but the Jacobins were pleased and printed their speeches.²

In the summer the Assembly grew more lenient towards ecclesiastics, and when, on Aug. 4th, the Ecclesiastical Committee proposed severe measures against non-jurors, twenty members, among whom were Barnave, Le Chapelier, Pétion, and Malouet, put their names down to speak against the bill. It was rejected without discussion.³

We must now turn to the "Club monarchique," a new society which opened in the "Panthéon" about mid-November, and began to be active a little later. Its founders were some of the old "Impartials," Clermont-Tonnerre and Malouet being the most prominent ; it was said to be connected with the Club des Fédérés, which was dissolved about this time,⁴ and it came into the field as a rival to the Jacobins, with a correspondence in the country and a journal. Worst cut of all, it stole the Jacobins' name, and called itself "Société des Amis de la Constitution monarchique." The policy of this

¹ *Moniteur*, vii. 237-8.

² Aulard, *Jacobins*, ii. 3, 174, 318.

³ *Moniteur*, ix. 306.

⁴ Halem, pt. ii. 247. (He confuses them with a "Club des Étrangers" which met in the Panthéon.) *Feuille du Jour*, 10 Dec., 75 (et alibi).

society was to pose as the only true defender of the Constitution, and to discredit the Jacobins. As it was rich it could distribute literature freely, and it was generally credited with encouraging anti-Jacobin libels. Malouet, who was not on the executive committee of the club, was above such meanness. One would like to say the same of Clermont-Tonnerre, who was a sincere and estimable as well as a gifted man. But some one circulated these libels, and it was not for nothing that Mirabeau, in his great Plan for the Court, suggested that Clermont-Tonnerre should be set over the department of literary propaganda, as though he were accustomed to deal with pamphleteers.¹ This only proves that he had a reputation of the kind, but there is some proof that he and his club encouraged scurrilous libels. In February, Gorsas states that the Club was distributing gratis a pamphlet called *Les Quand*. In this tract Barnave was represented as dining "habitually with a certain Jew, a Berlin banker, who says to every one who will listen, that people will not be free in France till they have cut the jugular of the Austrian woman," and Barnave laughs.² One would pay no heed to Gorsas here, were it not that in March the Club journal, directed if not actually edited by Clermont-Tonnerre, published with approving remarks extracts from another tract which has the same inspiration as the first. It contains an account of the intrigues of the Jew banker Ephraim, agent of the King of Prussia (a real man), who "passes his life with MM. de Lameth and with Madame de Sillery," "has secret conferences with M. d'Orléans," gets large sums from M. de la Borde, and says there will be no liberty in France "till they have killed the Queen."

Before Barnave's real denunciation of the Club monarchique, an attempt was made to prove him the author of a still more serious denunciation, and we can see it in the making.

The Jacobins, who did not love rivals, were naturally incensed at the rise of a society whose very name was a

¹ Lamarck, ii. 483-4.

² Gorsas, xxi. 56; *Les Quand*, 8 pp. (n. p., n. d.) (B. M. F. R. 360).

³ *Le Secret de la coalition des ennemis de la Révolution française* (25 pp.) quoted in *Journal de la Société des Amis de la Constitution monarchique*, no. 12, p. 40, &c. For an account of Ephraim, see Sybel, i. 349.

slandrous innuendo, but their conduct was at first correct. Nevertheless a member did make a violent attack on the new club, and we learn from the first number of the journal of the "Monarchiens" (so they were called), that M. * * * has been denouncing them in the Jacobins', and has proposed: 1. An address to the affiliated Societies against them. 2. A coalition of patriot journalists, to call down the hatred and contempt of the people upon them. 3. An attempt to induce the Sections of Paris to dissolve them.¹ Now had "M. * * *" been a well-known man, and most of all had he been Barnave, the journal would have been delighted to proclaim it and the denunciation would have made a sensation. A pamphlet called *Pendez-moi, mais écoutez-moi*, published at the time, suggests that the anonymous denouncer was Barnave. It is in dialogue; a "Bonhomme" says he hears that "one of the great barkers of the big Club has been breathing fire and flame to turn the heads of his comrades, the Jacobites. It was, I believe, little Barnave, who talked himself hoarse in announcing to his dear Club that a new society was just formed at the Panthéon." A "Monsieur" who answers, assumes that Barnave was the man, and adds that no doubt Charles Lameth has set him on. In the newspapers Barnave's supposed denunciation is only mentioned, so far as we know, by the anti-Jacobin *Feuille du Jour* (December 15th), where he is said to have insisted on making it though Mirabeau tried to stop him, and to have invited the Sections to meet and destroy the rival Club!² But these assertions are crude, and the really clever stroke was the publication of an insidious pamphlet purporting to be written by a Jacobin, and couched in the exact tone of regretful indignation that a liberal-minded admirer would have adopted if Barnave had actually been guilty of proposing M. * * *'s three measures. Such things, says the fictitious Jacobin, should not be done by "a man like M. Barnave;" he has not shown "the prudence which has always distinguished him," and he is begged not to "spoil his reputation." At first reading the pamphlet is absolutely

¹ *Journal . . . monarchique*, no. 1 (18 Dec.), p. 9.

² *Pendez-moi, mais écoutez-moi*, no. 4, 8 pp. (n.d., n.p.) (B. M. R. 204); *Feuille du Jour*, 15 Dec., 116.

deceptive, but the cloven hoof peeps out at two points. First, the date of the supposed denunciation is left in blank; secondly, the title is: "Observations impartiales d'un Jacobite;"¹ the Jacobins never called themselves by this name, and the use of it is always a sign that an enemy is speaking.

The Club monarchique had not been long open when it took a foolish and dangerous step in the search for popularity, and made arrangements to help the poor by having bread sold cheap to all who could show cards distributed by the society. The plan must infallibly have produced riots against bakers who continued to sell bread at the usual prices to other customers, and it was quickly denounced to the Mayor and to the Jacobins.² The Sections of Paris were up in arms at once, the owner of the Panthéon refused to let the Club meet there any more, and its sittings were suspended by the Municipality. This last act was illegal; the Jacobins protested, and the Club was allowed to re-open. The Monarchiens held a public meeting at "Vauxhall" on Jan. 21st,³ but in a few days they were in trouble again, suspected as they were of being at the bottom of two "incendiary manœuvres." On Jan. 22nd, a day when the Faubourg St. Antoine was petitioning the Assembly to exclude English manufactures, posters inciting the workmen to rise and pillage all English goods in Paris were found plastered up in the streets of this quarter, and it was believed that the Monarchiens had put them there.⁴ Worse still, when on Jan. 24th there was a fight in the suburb of la Chapelle between the "Chasseurs des Barrières," searching for contraband in a high-handed way, and the populace headed by the municipality, the Monarchiens were supposed to have set the Chasseurs on. Several men were killed in this riot, and the news spread consternation.⁵

The Jacobins were seriously alarmed and their sitting that

¹ 8 pp. (n. d., n. p.) (B. M. F. 808), reprinted, Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 449.

² 25 Dec.; Aulard, *Jacobins*, i. 437; *Journal . . . monarchique*, no. 3; *Révolutions de Paris*, vi. 629.

³ *Jacobin Journal*, 25 Jan., 395, note; *Feuille du Jour*, 18 Jan., p. 138; *Gazette universelle*, 26 Jan., p. 103.

⁴ *Révolutions de Paris*, vii. 114; W. A. Miles, *Correspondence*, i. 205-6; *Chronique*, 26 Jan., p. 103.

⁵ *Moniteur*, vii. 241 xii. 367; *Révolutions de Paris*, vii. 115.

evening was a stirring one. They thought Paris in so inflammable a state that they resolved to meet each night till calmer days, and the members took an oath "to defend with their fortunes and their blood every citizen who has the courage to devote himself to the denunciation of traitors to the country, and conspirators against the law." They also adopted an unwise circular to the affiliated Societies about the riot, in which they asserted that the Chasseurs had owned to having been paid to commit the crime, and added: "We are also threatened with disturbances which a society, known by the name of 'Amis de la Constitution monarchique,' is trying to excite."¹ In short, they lost their heads.

It was on the following evening, Jan. 25th, that Barnave, during his heated speech on the manœuvres of the Clergy, turned from them to attack the Club monarchique, thus:

"While the word 'Religion' serves as a rallying cry to men who are in reality merely defending the abuses we have destroyed, other factious men are profaning the words 'monarchical constitution' by giving poisoned bread to the people, by seeking to decoy them into perfidious snares, by sowing divisions and disorder among us. (Cries from the Right, "That is out of order!") This is not the time to speak of what concerns this insidious and perfidious association, but I thought it right to say one word on the subject."

("The agitations and the cries of the Right increase, answered by applause from the Left. Every time that Messrs. Murinais, Malouet, and other members try to speak, this applause redoubles. M. Malouet leaves his place, rushes to the tribune and speaks to M. Barnave, gesticulating in a very lively manner." "Call M. Malouet, the Intendant, who is playing the bravo, to order," cries Charles Lameth.²) Barnave continues:

"Doubtless the magistrates whose duty it is to keep order—(the Right interrupt) Your Comité des Recherches will soon inform you of these factious manœuvres, of these distributions of bread at half price to make the people rise; it will even

¹ Aulard, *Jacobins*, ii. 28. The oath was proposed by a provincial Jacobin; *Orateur du Peuple*, iv. 300.

² This passage in brackets, *Moniteur*, vii. 226; the rest from Le Hodey.

tell you the names of those who are not afraid to appear as authors and leaders here. I have only spoken of it because it seems to me evident that such audacity—here, in the midst of the Revolution, in the very heart of this city which began it, which will always defend it—must needs be reckoning upon finding itself countenanced by the resistance to the Revolution which it is hoped will follow upon the refusal to take the ecclesiastical oath.”¹

When Barnave left the tribune after his fiery words, the Left went on applauding till he had regained his place, and the Right were incoherent with rage. “I demand,” cried Malouet, “that liberty, that the safety of individuals and of the public shall not be outraged with impunity in this tribune—I demand that the denunciation which has been made shall be recorded in the *procès-verbal*—I demand that the Assembly shall indicate a tribunal—I demand that the previous speaker shall deposit his denunciation with the Bureau—I demand”—Here Murinais cut in: “I demand that the member who has called down the cutlasses of assassins on the heads of honest men, who”—here his words were lost in the tumult; by and by he was heard denouncing the Jacobins, and Malouet was crying, “How shall we put an end to disorder as long as a dominating Club reigns over France?” At length the Left rose to their feet, crying *aux voix!* and the Committees’ bill was passed.²

Barnave’s speech had a great success and applause was not confined to the Assembly. The patriots in general were delighted and Brissot, mollified, said that Barnave had refuted Maury “with an energy which is unusual with him.” Up to this time there had been no popular demonstrations against the Club monarchique, but on the 27th Clermont-Tonnerre’s house was threatened, and there were cries of *à la lanterne!* as he passed. It was nothing serious and Bailly soon restored order.³

The righteous anger of the Monarchiens when the kind-

¹ LeHodey, xx. 344. The phrase “poisoned bread” was not Barnave’s invention, it had been used in the form of “un aliment empoisonné” by the Tuileries Section (28 Dec.), in a Resolution which they took to the Jacobins. The *Journal . . . monarchique* (no. 4, Jan. 8, pp. 14, 25) prints it, with comments.

² *Moniteur*, vii. 227.

³ *Patriote français*, 27 Jan., 106; *Moniteur*, vii. 244–5, 247.

hearted Barnave of reality turned upon his enemies for once in his life and spoke like the Barnave of their fictions, was loud. As the Monarchiens have often been represented as merely passive and persecuted, it will be instructive to notice what reprisals they took. Malouet, besides seizing every opportunity of attacking the tyranny of Barnave and the Jacobins in the Assembly, published a reply in the *Journal monarchique*. It began: "I had seen crimes unpunished, men greedy of power raising themselves by every kind of intrigue; I have known despotic princes and absolute ministers; but I did not know tyranny in all its audacity, and I cannot conceive how there can be men vile enough to bow before the tyranny which masks itself under the name of patriotism." He spoke of the "frightful scenes," when the Assembly received "with transports of joy," "words of blood, calumnies and outrages on the oppressed;" and after a long diatribe on the Jacobins he twitted Barnave with his imprudence in attacking the Monarchiens before the triumph of a Republic was assured, and told him that he should have waited a little, for in politics "one step forwards which necessitates two back should never be made."¹ Readers of Malouet's memoirs will be edified by his language.

The outraged Club demanded a hearing in the Assembly; it was refused, and the Monarchiens published an open letter to Barnave, citing him to the tribunal of public justice, since they could not prosecute a deputy. "If you believe that you can justify your denunciation," do so, they wrote. "If on the contrary, . . . you have only acted on this occasion as an imprudent young man, devoted to a fanatical sect and not sufficiently exercised in the sanguinary art of political denunciation, hasten to retract it." A second edition of the letter appeared, and a new one was promised for every week until Barnave retracted.²

The Club monarchique fell into complete disrepute; "1789" pronounced against it, the Sections continued to denounce it

¹ *Journal . . . monarchique*, no. 7 (29 Jan.), pp. 22, 29.

² *Moniteur*, vii. 243; *Seconde édition de la Lettre du Directoire de la Société des Amis de la Constitution monarchique à M. Barnave*, 2 pp. (B. M. R. 156). The first edition on 12 Feb.

to the Jacobins, Vauxhall was closed to it and no more public meetings were possible. The organization, however, continued vigorous till June, and the Jacobins were compelled to withdraw their ill-advised circular.

The third and last subject on which Barnave went astray was the departure of Mesdames the King's aunts.

France was kept uneasy by the doings of the émigrés, the discontented who had left their country in large numbers and were plotting with her enemies abroad. The Princes, who acted as their leaders, made centres round which disaffection might gather, and advertised to the world by their voluntary exile that France was no longer a place where royalty could reside. So few of the royal family remained at home that even Mesdames had become personages of some importance, and it was as natural that the French, to whom the departure of each prince meant pecuniary loss, should wish to keep them, as that two old princesses, to whom the Civil Constitution was anathema, should wish to take refuge in Rome. But their departure would not have excited the uproar it did, if it had not been regarded as a prelude to the flight of the King or the Dauphin, of which rumours were rife in January and February.

The Jacobins, whose attention was called to these rumours by Dubois-Crancé, sent messengers to Versailles to spy out the land. Great preparations in the stables were reported, and apprehension was not allayed by the announcement of Mesdames' approaching journey, though d'Aiguillon pointed out to the Club that the ladies were free to go where they liked. Every one was anxious that Mesdames should stay in France. The Court, instructed by Mirabeau, was aware that their departure was highly impolitic, and the King, without whose leave members of the royal family could not travel, was openly reluctant to give it. The poissardes demonstrated, the Municipality opposed, the Sections met. Finally the Paris Commune petitioned the Assembly for a law on the duties of the royal family and the Assembly referred the petition to the Constitutional Committee for immediate report, thus giving it a kind of sanction.¹ Mesdames started in spite of all, and

¹ Aulard, *Jacobins*, ii. 42 (from *Journal des Clubs*) ; 14 Feb., *Procès-verbal*, no. 562, p. 29, &c. (vol. 46).

the King, who announced their departure to the Assembly, announced also that he had not thought himself entitled to refuse his permission.

On the following morning, Monday, Feb. 21st, Barnave, who did not usually reach the Assembly before mid-day, came in at ten o'clock, to move before the debates began, that the Constitutional Committee should present a bill on the duties of the royal family, in two days. Mesdames, he said, had gone in defiance of the measures the Assembly was taking, persuaded by guilty advisers to withdraw from their "real and legal obligations." "Now that public opinion is already agitated over far more important departures, which are it is said to follow this, it is time to carry out the law and to reassure the nation." . . .

"Already most of the members of the royal family are absent; already the steps taken by some of them authorize public opinion to count them among the cruellest, the most dangerous adversaries of the Constitution. It is time to put a stop to these unseemly ideas; it is time that we should know, at last, what are the obligations of those whose advantages and honours have been already determined by the nation. We must know whether the impoverishment of the public revenues, whether carrying coin out of the kingdom in a moment of crisis, whether keeping the people in perpetual uneasiness, whether encouraging the enemies of the nation to a prolonged resistance,—whether, I say, all these things are the signs of their gratitude; whether such is always to be the work, the conduct, and perhaps the object, of those whom the nation has loaded with honours and benefits. The head of the royal family, guided by his heart, guided by a patriotism of which he has given us many proofs," has tried in vain to hinder these evils; "it is the turn of the law to speak."¹

Fréteau supported Barnave, and the motion passed. Barnave was supposed to have referred to the approaching departure of "Monsieur," and on Tuesday evening a mob, excited it was said by the speech, went to the Luxembourg where Monsieur lived, forced their way into his presence, and insisted on escorting him to the Tuileries. "There was nothing

¹ Le Hodey, xxii. 7; *Ami des Patriotes*, i. 400.

alarming, but it was all very improper," wrote Montmorin to Mirabeau.¹

This is the last time that Barnave spoke recklessly in the Assembly. He held the opinion that Mesdames ought to be stopped and said so in the Jacobins',² but in the further debates on the subject he showed moderation, and in a few days he was completely himself again. His errors had immediate consequences, in that they opened the way for a celebrated attack on his party by Mirabeau, and we must follow the course of events for a little longer in order to finish the story.

Mirabeau was outwardly on good terms with the Jacobin leaders, and had taken their part warmly against Lafayette, of whom he was always suspicious; nevertheless he seems to have made no secret of his intention to undermine their influence in the Club,³ and he continued to regard them as his enemies, especially the Lameths. Towards Barnave, with whom he worked amicably on the Diplomatic Committee where they seem to have been usually in agreement, his feelings were modified, and he had paid him the compliment in his great Plan for the Court, of including him among the twelve deputies through whom, but without their knowing it, the Court was to influence the Assembly. This strange scheme deserves a word, though no steps were ever taken to carry it out.⁴ The deputies, de Bonnay, the abbé de Montesquiou, Cazalès, Clermont-Tonnerre, d'André, Duquesnoy (who was to serve as go-between), Talleyrand, Emmery, Le Chapelier, Thouret, Mirabeau and Barnave, were to be consulted privately by Montmorin. The first five formed a group and might be seen together, but were not to know that any one else was in the minister's confidence; Le Chapelier and Thouret were coupled in the same way; Barnave was always to be seen alone. Only Duquesnoy was to know which deputies were involved; only Montmorin and Mirabeau were to know exactly the end in view, about which every other deputy was to be "nearly always" deceived. Montmorin was to ask

¹ *Moniteur*, vii. 452; Lamarck, iii. 66.

² *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, nos. 66, p. 38, and 67, p. 79.

³ *Bruchstücke*, 35, 74, 105; Barnave's defence, *Œuvres*, ii. 366.

⁴ Lamarck, iii. 53 (cf. pp. 24 and 27).

advice on some point other than the one in his mind, and by skilfully combining and comparing all the opinions given him, Mirabeau and he would be able to shape their course.¹ The idea seems foolish on the face of it. It would have been impossible to go on duping ten men of the intelligence of the deputies selected, while Mirabeau could not have fixed on two men in the world less likely to act as puppets than Barnave and Cazalès.

During the winter Mirabeau had greatly improved his position. He was hand in glove with Montmorin; he had Court influence to back him; he had gained popularity by his anti-clerical attitude and by his connexion with the Jacobins. He had been President of the Club in December; in the first half of February he was President of the Assembly, and won fresh consideration as the best the Assembly had yet known. By the end of the month he thought himself strong enough to drop disguises and to reduce his rivals to comparative impotence by branding them as "factionous." Barnave's violence had given some colour to the charge, and Mirabeau joined with the Centre and the Right in trying to fasten the responsibility of the riots which followed the departure of Mesdames upon the Jacobin leaders. Barnave, Duport, and the Lameths were, of course, the chief of these leaders, but with them must be reckoned d'Aiguillon, Menou, and Alexandre Beauharnois,—Camille Desmoulins calls them a little later "the patriot septemvirate,"—and Noailles, who left them soon after. They were followed pretty constantly by a small band, and could count on thirty to thirty-three votes, at the worst. Such, at least, was the constant taunt of their enemies; Alexandre Lameth claimed that a hundred and fifty Jacobin deputies hung together.²

The first signs of the coming storm were on Thursday, Feb. 24th, when it was announced to the Assembly that

¹ Lamarck, ii. 468-72.

² *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 78, p. 589, and no. 67, p. 76. Besides those named the thirty comprised Laborde, Broglie, Dubois-Crancé, Muguet de Nanthou, Prieur, Chabroud, Bouteville-Dumetz, Salle, Anthoine, Gourdan, Verchère, Vernier, Reubell, Pétion, Robespierre, perhaps Goupil. All preserved independence. See Ælsner (*Bruchstücke*, 65) on the party; he expressly includes Pétion and Robespierre.

Mesdames had been stopped at Arnay-le-Duc by the Commune, and detained pending further inquiry. The action was clearly illegal, but the conduct of the Commune could be looked at in two lights. From one point of view it was a flagrant act of mob-law which deserved reprobation, and this was the view taken by Maury, Fréteau, and d'André; from the other the Commune had only misinterpreted a decree of the Assembly and had shown a zeal excusable in troubled times. This was the view taken by Barnave, who proposed, in a badly worded motion, that the Assembly should explain why Mesdames could not be detained, and should beg the King to consider the consequences of the permission which he had given.¹ Camus went further still; Mirabeau came between the two parties; he excused the Commune, but held that further infractions of the law must be prevented and proposed to refer the whole affair to the King.

The discussion was closed, but Alexandre Lameth had made up his mind to speak, and speak he did; Duport, who was President, and could not keep order, making no attempt to stop him. Hitherto Alexandre had been prudent; now, following Barnave's bad example, he declaimed against the ingratitude of the royal family, while the galleries applauded. He was out of order, his words laid him open to misconstruction, and he excited the wrath of Mirabeau, who walked towards the tribune, saying loudly "that he should allow no one to make himself popular at the expense of principles." Barnave stopped him. "Everyone," wrote Duquesnoy, "was able to perceive how M. Barnave was wheedling M. Mirabeau, and several persons heard him assuring him 'that Alexandre had not been thinking of him, that he only wanted to combat André and Fréteau;' I copy his expressions."² Having appeased Mirabeau, Barnave tried to regularize Lameth's speech by explaining that his motion had been meant as an amendment on Mirabeau's.

Duport also came to the help of his friend, but in an unfortunate way, for he refused to let any one else speak. An angry and noisy debate followed, in which Beaumez fell upon Lameth,

¹ Le Hodey, xxii. 52-9.

² *Ami des Patriotes*, i. 404, note.

and putting into his mouth words which he had not used, represented him as having recommended insurrection. There was a long period of tumult, from which Menou rescued the Assembly by a joke: "What will be said when it is known in Europe that the National Assembly of France has been occupied for four hours with the departure of two ladies, who would rather go to hear mass in Rome than in Paris?"¹ Mirabeau's motion passed, only the Lameths with the faithful thirty voting against it. Barnave abstained from voting.²

On Friday the Right made an attack on the Jacobin leaders; needless to say, they had no understanding with Mirabeau, but it is conceivable that ministerial influence may have urged them on. The Constitutional Committee presented a bill "on the residence of public functionaries," which was none other than the law on the duties of the royal family that Barnave had demanded. The bill did not find favour; Cazalès criticized it and demanded an adjournment; Barnave concurred, but asked for a provisional law, necessitated by the circumstances, forbidding members of the royal family to leave the kingdom without permission from the Assembly. The bill was adjourned. In the course of the debate the Right, either wilfully or mistakenly, misinterpreted some words of Duport's as frank disloyalty and made a great scene, shouting *Vive le roi!* tumultuously, while Montlosier waved his cane. Nothing would stop them till Mirabeau, who got a hearing with difficulty, proved to them that the President had not used the words imputed to him. But Mirabeau was speaking in no friendly spirit, and he proceeded to promise, in enigmatic words, that he himself would fight "the factious" of every kind, wherever and in whatever post they might be. "Destroy the Jacobins and we shall have peace!" shouted Foucauld, interpreting Mirabeau's innuendo.³

Mirabeau's veiled hostilities were not confined to the Manège; he drew up for the Paris "Department," of which he was a member, a Proclamation, warning the people against being led into riots by "the factious," whom he described in terms

¹ Le Hodey, xxii. 60-5; *Moniteur*, vii. 470-2.

² *Lendemain*, 25 Feb., p. 698.

³ Le Hodey, xxii. 73, &c.

which could only apply to the Jacobins ; “ the factious are those who never cease telling the people that liberty is in danger.” If we are to believe Duport and Lameth, both Lafayette and the municipal authorities fell in with Mirabeau’s designs, and all through the week they kept the National Guard on foot, beating drums and dragging about cannons in a way that suggested disturbances.¹ There was a riot on Thursday evening close to the Tuileries ; on Monday the 28th the mob went to Vincennes to pull down the donjon, and the National Guard went after them ; nor was this the only disturbance, some hot bloods assembled in the Tuileries Palace to defend the King from imaginary dangers, against his will, and Lafayette turned them out on his return from Vincennes.

On the same day a law on emigration was before the Assembly. The subject had been touched in December, when it had been decreed that the salaries and emoluments of public functionaries, who having emigrated would not return to take the civic oath, should be stopped ; and on the departure of Mesdames it was felt that further measures were necessary. A few days before the 28th Le Chapelier, on behalf of the Constitutional Committee, had promised to present a law on emigration, applicable only in troubled times. He evidently approved of such a law ; saying that it was “ necessary ” and that “ liberty will not be alarmed at it.” His conduct when he did present the law is only explicable on the suggestion of Camille Desmoulins, that he had an understanding with Mirabeau and was laying a trap for the Jacobins.²

He began by announcing that he and his colleagues had become convinced of the impossibility of making a law on emigration, and though, as in duty bound, they had prepared the best law they could, it was so dreadful that he hoped the Assembly would not insist on hearing it. Regnaud, d’André, and others agreed in chorus that the subject must be dropped, and Mirabeau, coming forward as the champion of freedom, said that several notes had reached him, asking

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 67, pp. 62–3, 80–2.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 66–7 ; *Projet de loi*, &c., annexed to *Procès-verbal*, no. 571 (vol. 47).

him to stand guard over what was called "the necessity of the circumstances,"—a hit at Barnave, who was supposed to be fond of proposing provisional laws.¹ He read a letter which he had written to the King of Prussia, eight years before, exhorting that monarch to put no hindrance on emigration, and proposed a resolution which declared that a law on the emigrants was irreconcilable with the Constitution. Thus he put the Jacobins on the side of tyranny if they insisted on hearing the bill. They did insist, nevertheless, and Le Chapelier was forced to read it. His proposal was, that in times of trouble the Assembly should appoint a Council of three, with dictatorial powers for preventing emigration and summoning emigrants back, and that all the property of those who failed to return when so summoned might be confiscated.

It was mere mockery to suggest such a law to the Constituent Assembly; there was a general murmur of horror, and cries of "The previous question!" rose from all sides. Mirabeau proceeded to point the moral: "The barbarity of the law proposed to you is the strongest proof of the impracticability of a law on emigration." Warming to his theme, he spoke of his own popularity and its secure foundations, and swore never to obey a law against emigrants. The Jacobin leaders thought it wiser to keep silence, in view of the irritation shown with them during the past week,² but a Jacobin, Vernier, persisted that there must be some alternative to this "barbarous" and "ridiculous" law, and moved that a report on the subject should be made by all the Committees. The debate grew stormier; Mirabeau insisted on speaking again; the extreme Left, losing patience, rose to their feet and interrupted him repeatedly. "I beg those who interrupt me to remember that all my life I have fought despotism, and to be persuaded that I shall continue to fight it, all my life!" he exclaimed, and when the interruptions continued he shouted his famous defiance: "Silence aux trente voix!" He ended by declaring that if the Assembly adopted Vernier's motion he should propose as an amendment: "That it be decreed, that from now to the expiration of the adjournment, there

¹ *Bruchstücke*, 32.

² *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 67, p. 79.

shall be no more riots." Most of the Assembly applauded, but Vernier's motion passed.¹

The account of the celebrated sitting at the Jacobins' that evening when Duport and Alexandre Lameth annihilated Mirabeau, face to face, must be read in the pages of Camille Desmoulins, whose report is well substantiated by contemporaries. The kindly Duport relented at the end of his speech and held out an olive branch; not so Lameth, inspired throughout by anger and hatred and eloquent as he never was before or after, "truly sublime," says Desmoulins, who enjoyed denunciations. He lashed all the enemies of the Jacobins, exposing their unworthy manœuvres, and to Mirabeau he was merciless, speaking bitter, unforgivable words: "I am not one of those who think that sound politics require that we should be careful with M. Mirabeau, that we should not make him desperate. On the contrary, I am firmly convinced that if M. Mirabeau were not one of us he would be no more dangerous than Cazalès or Maury; he would be on their level." As for the real "factious", 'they are those,' he said, 'who left the Jacobins for "1789", and then returned to the Jacobins without leaving "1789";' "those who would not be hanged if there were a counter-revolution."²

Mirabeau, who had listened, pale and trembling, to a denunciation which contained more truth than Lameth knew, answered with his usual pluck, speaking against the solid hostility of the Society, the loud, scornful comments of Charles Lameth, who sat opposite, and the angry shouts of St. Hururge and others.³ He could not defend himself, but he was apologetic; he protested his attachment to the Jacobins, he abused "1789," and he was forgiven.

It is often said that his death was hastened by this dreadful ordeal; one would doubt it, for he does not seem to have been cast down. He withdrew the obnoxious phrase from the Proclamation of the Department, but he thundered against "the factious" when he appeared before the Assembly with

¹ *Moniteur*, vii. 503-4, 506-11; *Le Hodey*, xxii. 138.

² *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 67, pp. 61-91.

³ *Miles*, i. 271-2. Miles, who was present, writes of Mirabeau (i. 252) "I never heard a man speak so badly in my life."

a deputation on March 1st, and on the 4th he took part in a debate on emigration in the Jacobins', when he defended his opinion, but trounced Laclos for quoting him as saying that any law against the emigrants would be unjust and impracticable.¹

It was not in Barnave's nature to torment anyone, and he took no part in this painful scene at the Club, though he must have been present. But as soon as his friends were attacked in consequence of it, he hastened to their rescue. Alexandre Lameth had denounced Le Chapelier, Beaumez, d'André, Regnaud and Duquesnoy, as well as Mirabeau and Lafayette, and the papers were full of angry letters from the offended deputies. Le Chapelier professed that "the hatred" of the denouncer "and of his three or four friends" was an honour, and Duquesnoy wrote to the Jacobins themselves, contrasting his own independent spirit with Alexandre's "profound ambition." "The insupportable despotism of MM. de Lameth and some of their friends has estranged some very ardent lovers of liberty from your society," he complained. The letter was impudent from a man like Duquesnoy, whose general character was well known, though his authorship of the *Ami des Patriotes* was still a secret. It was read to the Club on the 2nd, Barnave made a speech in praise of the Lameths, and on his motion the Society adopted a Declaration which he had drawn up, to the effect that the letter which had been read "adds to the esteem and attachment which it feels for M. Alexandre Lameth and for all those who, like him, began the Revolution and have supported it without varying."²

Mirabeau writes to Lamarck that Duquesnoy's letter infuriated the Jacobins, and "gave M. Barnave the opportunity of making a long enumeration of the services which MM. de Lameth had rendered the Revolution, and of declaring that they would perish together. Hence an ecstatic chorus of

¹ Lamarck, iii. 75-7 (the note on p. 77 is in error as to what was withdrawn). *Moniteur*, vii. 517; *Feuille du Jour*, 10 March, p. 552, and *Journal général*, par Fontenai, 8 March, p. 144.

² *Journal de Paris*, 4 March, supp. (Le Chapelier). *Ami des Patriotes*, i. 440, note; *Chronique*, 6 March, p. 257. The *Feuille du Jour*, 7 March, p. 527, reports that Danton and Laclos supported Barnave. There is a draft of the Resolution among Barnave's papers. *A. N. W.* 13, 100.

applause, hence an insolent reply [to Duquesnoy], hence above all the detestable effect of binding the Jacobins to their leaders instead of cutting the leaders away from the Jacobins, as my proceeding did. I am in truth very much discouraged, very much embarrassed, very much annoyed to have put myself forward alone," &c. Montmorin tried to comfort Mirabeau; he thought "the Lameths and company" "ruined," and though it was impossible to separate the Jacobins from them at present, he promised to work secretly for that object.¹

Mirabeau's manœuvre failed at the time, yet he was partially successful with posterity, inasmuch as he once more managed to saddle his opponents with opinions which they did not hold; and one often finds them represented as having wished for Le Chapelier's law against the emigrants, while Mirabeau stood up for freedom. That he has also been partially successful in fixing on them the epithet of "factious," is due to Barnave's errors during that short period when, over three subjects, he belied his usual moderation, and set an example which the Lameths were only too willing to follow.

¹ 3 and 4 March, Lamarck, iii, 78, 80.

OXFORD: HORACE HART
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

